United Nations A/C.2/60/SR.20

General Assembly
Sixtieth session

Official Records

Distr.: General
2 December 2005

Original: English

Second Committee

Summary record of the 20th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 2 November 2005, at 9.30 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Toscano (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Switzerland)

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05-58325 (E)

In the absence of Mr. Wali (Nigeria), Mr. Toscano (Switzerland), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 9.40 a.m.

Agenda item 52: Sustainable development (A/60/3, Suppl. No. 3, A/60/25, Suppl. No. 25, A/60/25/Add.1, A/60/79, A/60/111, A/60/129, A/60/336 and A/60/167)

(a) Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (A/60/115, A/60/261 and Corr.1 and A/60/158)

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(d) Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind (A/60/171)

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(f) Promotion of new and renewable sources of energy, including the implementation of the World Solar Programme 1996-2005 (A/60/154 and A/60/82)

(g) Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa (A/60/169 and A/60/171)

(h) Convention on Biological Diversity (A/60/171)

(i) Rendering assistance to poor mountain countries to overcome obstacles in socio-economic and ecological areas

1. **Mr. Jomo** (Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development), speaking on behalf of the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, said that the 2005 World Summit had reaffirmed the firm commitment to sustainable development and reiterated the importance of integrating the three pillars of such development. More and more countries were integrating sustainable development principles into national and local development strategies. Governments, civil society and other stakeholders were no longer satisfied with strategies; they wanted results. That same expectation had been driving the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development, focused on action-oriented policy decisions to speed up implementation in the areas of water, sanitation and human settlements.

2. The Mauritius Strategy advocated specific action to strengthen the capacity of small island developing States to address their vulnerabilities. Referring to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, he said that climate action and energy use must be approached in the wider context of sustainable development. Every effort must be made to meet that urgent challenge; the upcoming eleventh session of the Conference of the Parties and first Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol in Montreal would be the ideal setting for strengthening global efforts to advance mitigation and adaptation strategies in the broad context of sustainable development.

3. The accelerated development and use of renewable energy offered multiple benefits for sustainable development. The fourteenth and fifteenth sessions of the Commission on Sustainable Development should galvanize global action to promote renewable energy and to formulate follow-up to the World Solar Programme 1996-2005. The recent spate of natural disasters throughout the world underscored the need for the international community to redouble its efforts to reduce the impact of such disasters. Despite encouraging progress since the Johannesburg Summit, sustainable development remained a major challenge. The international community must therefore take swift collective action in order to fulfil its commitments, including the Millennium Development Goals and the Johannesburg targets, so that the broad common development vision could be transformed into reality.

4. **Mr. de Villiers** (Observer for the World Tourism Organization), introducing his organization's report on the implementation of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism (A/60/167), said that tourism had become the world's largest export industry, accounting for 7.5 per cent of the value of worldwide exports of goods and

services. It was one of the biggest employers in the world and, since it generated jobs in remote and rural areas, had a significant impact on poverty alleviation. However, not all forms of tourism were good or acceptable. Unregulated tourism could have a serious adverse impact on the natural and cultural environment of receiving destinations, particularly in developing countries. The Code of Ethics had arisen out of the need to develop tourism on the basis of sound and fundamental values; it was voluntary and non-binding. A World Committee on Tourism Ethics had been created to monitor, evaluate and guide the implementation of the Code. In conclusion, he called on the governments that had not already taken steps to disseminate and implement the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism to develop a policy in that regard.

5. **Mr. Egeland** (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator), introduced the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (A/60/180). Disaster risk reduction was currently at the top of the international community's agenda, especially in the light of the unprecedented number of recent natural disasters, including the devastating tsunami. While such disasters could not have been avoided, early warning and a swifter response could have saved many lives and livelihoods. In that regard, the Hyogo World Conference on Disaster Reduction had provided an opportunity for the international community to rethink strategies for reducing the root causes of disasters. While the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities was a major step forward, there was still a need to secure a higher level of commitment for systematically reducing risk and strengthening institutional capacities at local and national levels. Had the actions and recommendations set out in the Hyogo Framework been implemented, many deaths and considerable losses would have been avoided. For example, the application of building codes to schools and hospitals in Pakistan, the maintenance of levees and restoration of wetlands in Louisiana or instruction on how to react to the precursory signs of tsunamis would not only have saved lives but would also have been cost effective.

6. The key elements of the strengthened International Strategy for Disaster Reduction were: a *strengthening of the leadership role played by the* Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and the United Nations; a strong partnership between the humanitarian and development programmes of the United Nations; an expanded Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction with a programme committee and active participation of governments; and a strengthened partnership with donors and scientific institutions.

7. All development programmes and investments should be disaster-risk sensitive. Also, more stable resources must be allocated to the core needs of the International Strategy from Member States and from the regular budget of the United Nations. Furthermore, there was a need to increase technical and scientific understanding of disaster risk and to build a capacity to share knowledge on what was doable with decision makers and the population at large.

8. **Mr. Diallo** (Executive Secretary, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa (UNCCD)) introduced the reports on implementation of the Convention (A/60/171) and on preparations for the International Year of Deserts and Desertification, 2006 (A/60/169). The former highlighted, inter alia, recent major developments in the context of the Convention and synergies between the Convention and other relevant instruments, including the United Nations Forum on Forests. The third session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention had discussed specific thematic issues pertaining to the implementation process in Africa, including participatory processes involving civil society, non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations; legislative and institutional frameworks; resource mobilization; and rehabilitation of degraded land and early warning systems for mitigating the effects of drought.

9. It had been decided at the seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to conclude a memorandum of understanding with the Council of the Global Environment Facility (GEF). That session had encouraged Parties to strive for coordinated implementation and invited the governing bodies of the Framework Convention on Climate Change and of the Convention on Biological Diversity to take into consideration UNCCD decisions relating to synergies in their deliberations. Lastly, referring to the financial resources of the Convention, he said that many Parties

were disappointed by the decision on the programme and budget to finance activities of the secretariat; that decision would lead to a significant staff reduction, thus hampering the secretariat's ability to deliver.

10. The International Year of Deserts and Desertification would raise public awareness of the issue of desertification and protect the biological diversity, knowledge and traditions of communities affected by desertification. Major initiatives would be undertaken during the Year on key sectoral issues such as: youth and desertification; women and desertification; civil society and desertification; and poverty, hunger and desertification. The Government of Algeria would host a Summit on the theme of desertification, migrations and security to conclude the International Year.

11. **Mr. Kinley** (Officer-in-Charge, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change), introducing the report of the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change on the work of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention (A/60/171), said that 2005 had seen the entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol, giving renewed political momentum to efforts to deal with the challenge of global climate change. Many recent events had demonstrated the world's vulnerability to climate-related disasters. The tenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention had adopted a programme of work on adaptation and response measures, an important step in mainstreaming adaptation into the international response to climate change and into sustainable development planning. The eleventh session of the Conference of the Parties was expected to adopt a five-year programme of work on the scientific, technical and socio-economic aspects of climate impact and vulnerability and adaptation to climate change.

12. The tenth session had showed strong support for the fully operational clean development mechanism (CDM) and opened the way for new types of CDM projects relating to small-scale forestry in addition to existing projects that produced power from renewable energy sources or from methane captured at landfills. Progress had also been made on the issue of financial support for developing countries. The Special Climate Change Fund would initially provide resources for adaptation and technology transfer and its associated capacity-building. To date, pledges of $34 million had been made. The Subsidiary Body for Implementation had agreed on a draft decision on the Least Developed Countries Fund, which would support the preparation and implementation of national adaptation programmes of action in least developed countries. Initial voluntary contributions of about $33.5 million had been made to that Fund; it was clear, however, that additional financial support would be required to meet the pressing needs of developing countries in mitigating and adapting to climate change.

13. As at 19 October 2005, 127 developing countries had submitted their initial national communications. Noting that political attention to the issue of climate change was greater than ever, he hoped that the eleventh session of the Conference of the Parties, together with the historic first meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol in Montreal, would lead to progress in a number of key policy areas, including decisions completing the Protocol's institutional architecture and strengthening the emerging carbon markets. It was important to send a clear signal to the markets that governments intended to value the emission credits generated beyond the end of the Protocol's first commitment period in 2012. He also hoped that outstanding funding issues would be resolved in Montreal.

14. **Mr. Hunte** (Liaison Officer, Convention on Biological Diversity), introducing the report of the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, contained in section III of document A/60/171, said that the parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety currently numbered 124, and the Protocol had therefore garnered the broad level of support needed to ensure its objectives. He appealed nevertheless to remaining States to accede to the Protocol and to play a role in the new regime.

15. He referred to several meetings held in 2005 within the framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Cartagena Protocol, as outlined in paragraph 2 of section III A, and highlighted the major decisions and outcomes since the previous report. The report underscored some of the important tools developed at the second meeting of the Conference of the Parties for the effective implementation of the Protocol. The Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Protected Areas had a number of outcomes, including the initiation of work to compile and synthesize existing ecological criteria for future identification of potential sites for protection in marine areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction, and an agreement on

options for mobilizing financial resources for the implementation of the programme of work. In December 2005, the Working Group would continue to identify options for cooperation for the establishment of marine protected areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction. Progress toward the 2010 biodiversity target and the tangible measurement of that progress would be a key challenge in the years to come.

16. As regards cooperation with other conventions and international organizations and initiatives, a paper on the subject had been prepared in consultation with the secretariats of the five biodiversity-related conventions and a joint statement had been issued at the 2005 World Summit.

17. At the first meeting of the Ad hoc Open-Ended Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention, in September 2005, nine recommendations had been adopted on the review of processes and mechanisms, cooperation and engagement of the private sector, monitoring, reporting and evaluation processes. Participants had agreed on the need to streamline Convention processes and to provide assistance for national implementation.

18. With the continued support of Government organizations, civil society and the scientific community, the Convention would meet expectations and contribute significantly to sustainable development and poverty eradication.

19. **Mr. Rahmani** (Algeria), speaking in his capacity as an honorary spokesperson for the International Year of Deserts and Desertification, 2006, said that the issue of desertification had grown in importance and transcended geographical boundaries. There was a triple "decoupling". The first was between man and the stock of land and natural resources available to support the needs of humans. Demographic growth over territory that consisted largely of unproductive and fragile land and infertile soil, and the absence of soil replenishment had eroded the natural capital and exerted excessive pressure on existing natural resources. That situation had generated conditions of extreme poverty in desert areas, leading to massive emigration from those regions and spreading insecurity.

20. Secondly, as an example of the decoupling between traditional knowledge and modernization, he cited the example of the ancient system of irrigation that had sustainably channelled water underground to the places where they were needed, as opposed to the use of more recent drilling technology that had raised the salinity of the water supply and led to the degradation of biodiversity, water quality and land use in the deserts, and a wasted water supply. In parallel, a number of intangible qualities had also been eroded, such as cultural expressions associated with the former way of life in deserts: dialects, music and craftsmanship. The commemoration in 2006 of the International Year of Deserts and Desertification should raise awareness of traditional knowledge of communities affected by desertification and disappearing cultures. Good governance would entail the modernization of traditional knowledge and the conservation of agriculture in desert regions in a manner that boosted land productivity, and updated and widely disseminated traditional knowledge. Alternative strategies should be adopted to develop diverse fields of economic activity, which should be integrated into local and international policies that would create a leverage effect for the benefit of the populations living in desert areas.

21. The third "decoupling" referred to commitments made with respect to the Millennium Development Goals and the fact that the majority of extremely poor people lived in vulnerable regions. Unless serious and sustained action was taken with regard to desert populations, the Millennium Development Goals on poverty reduction and access to safe drinking water would be unattainable. The activities scheduled for the International Year should inform, enlighten and sensitize the international community on the threats posed by unfettered desertification, and the need for governments and public-private partnerships to incorporate policies targeting those objectives.

22. He appealed to the international community to respond to the desperate needs of desert populations and to mitigate the potential threat to world peace, the insecurity and the propagation of fear that could arise from the effects of destabilization in desert regions.

23. **Mr. Amin** (Director, New York Office, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)) introduced the report of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GC/GMEF) on its twenty-third session and the addendum to the report (A/60/25 and Add.1) and noted that environmental policy issues had grown in significance in General Assembly deliberations. UNEP looked forward to

further mainstreaming of environment in the work of the Assembly.

24. At the latest session of the Governing Council, held in February 2005, there had been increased high-level representation from the United Nations and other international organizations, as well as from academia, NGOs, business and industry, and youth organizations. Participants had unanimously expressed their conviction that environmental sustainability was crucial for the successful implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, and that the sustainable use of the natural resource base and responsible environmental management practices were prerequisites for development. The outcome of the ministerial segment was reflected in the President's summary and contained specific recommendations for the international community and governments. The ministers had highlighted the failure to operationalize the link between environmental sustainability and the Goals, recommending systematic integration of environmental sustainability considerations into all national poverty reduction strategies, United Nations development assistance frameworks and national development plans.

25. The ministers had also recommended further efforts to provide the economic rationale for investment in environmental sustainability, increased investment in environmentally sustainable water, sanitation and human settlements programmes within the framework adopted by the Commission on Sustainable Development, and recognition of the need for more affordable, small-scale and environmentally sustainable infrastructure giving priority to the needs of the poor.

26. A number of decisions of importance to the work of the Committee had also been adopted by the Council/Forum, including a decision on the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, and on early warning systems to prevent a recurrence of the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster.

27. The budget and work programme for 2006-2007 had been approved at $144 million, a 15 per cent increase over the previous biennium. The rising level of appropriations for the Environment Fund demonstrated growing confidence by member States in the work of UNEP. A decision on the international environmental governance process had underscored the full funding and implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-Building, which had been adopted by the Governing Council. The Plan represented a major development in the UNEP mandate to provide technical assistance at the country level, and in the level of cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) under the memorandum of understanding between the two Programmes. Other issues discussed had included the updated proposal by the Executive Director on an "Environment Watch" framework, to be submitted for consideration at the ninth special session to be held in Dubai in February 2006. Decisions had also been taken to strengthen the Environment Management Group and to appoint a director at a higher level, to discuss universal membership at the special session, and to provide the conclusions of that debate to the Secretary-General for inclusion in his report to the General Assembly.

28. A comprehensive decision on chemicals management, including lead in gasoline and mercury containment, had also been adopted, and the updated water policy and strategy of UNEP had been approved by the Council/Forum, and would be implemented and reviewed in consultation with governments.

29. The fight against poverty could not be won without sufficient protection of the natural resources base. Suffering was disproportionately greater among the poor when nature's warning signals were ignored, and leaders attending the 2005 World Summit had pointed out that environmental degradation exacerbated natural disasters. Understanding had grown even in the developed countries that the world could not simply continue to satisfy a hunger to consume. By acting as responsible stewards for the environment, the international community would make a useful contribution to the well-being of future generations. At the ninth special session, the Governing Council planned to consider its response to the far-reaching decisions on environment and sustainable development issues adopted at the 2005 World Summit.

30. **Ms. Chenoweth** (Director, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Liaison Office with the United Nations), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on sustainable mountain development (A/60/309), said that mountain environments worldwide still faced many challenges, despite the

international community's increased commitment to improving the well-being of mountain people. Wherever people lived, they were dependent on mountains for fresh water and for many varieties of food and, despite their enormous genetic diversity, mountain ecosystems were extremely fragile and under daily threat from climate change and human activity. As a result, over 245 million rural mountain people in developing and transition countries risked, or actually experienced, hunger and food insecurity.

31. Commitment to implementing chapter 13 of the Programme of Action for Sustainable Development (Agenda 21) adopted at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development ("Earth Summit"), the blueprint for sustainable mountain development, had been strengthened with the celebration of the International Year of Mountains in 2002. The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation described the actions needed for sustainable mountain development and served, with chapter 13 of Agenda 21, as its overall policy framework.

32. There was a need for better coordinated cooperation at all levels, increased funding and investment in mountain areas, and a stronger enabling environment with more supportive laws, policies and institutions in order to tackle effectively the precarious situation of the millions living in remote mountain regions. The International Partnership for Sustainable Development in Mountain Regions had steadily gained acceptance and served as a framework for long-term cooperation on sustainable mountain development, offering opportunities for networking and for initiating or strengthening activities.

33. As of October 2005, the Partnership comprised 44 countries, 14 intergovernmental organizations and 68 major group organizations from civil society, the non-governmental community and the private sector. It addressed, among other things, chronic poverty in mountain regions, and its members supported a variety of programmes, developed national policy initiatives and promoted regional cooperation and cross-border approaches.

34. The report suggested several courses of action for the achievement of sustainable mountain development: intersectoral collaboration; education and capacity-building; promotion of national strategies and plans; involvement of civil society and the private sector, and stronger channels of cooperation, coordination and communication. Member States should implement the recommendations and proposals in the report, so that concerted efforts to better the situation of mountain people and protect fragile mountain environments might yield lasting results.

35. **The Chairman** requested clarification on the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment and an update on developments regarding early warning systems.

36. **Mr. Amin** (Director, New York Office, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)) said that the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, launched years earlier with a number of partners, was a wide-ranging study of world ecosystem trends. Its most disturbing finding had been an alarming deterioration of the world's major natural resources, particularly as it affected the planet's biodiversity and other sustainability issues. If the Committee were willing, delegations' scientific representatives might be invited to the Committee for a substantive briefing from his Office.

37. **Ms. Molín-Valdés** (International Strategy for Disaster Reduction) said that governments, especially that of Sri Lanka, had been investing in early warning systems. Her Office had so far received 50 replies to a survey on that subject, which should be completed early in 2006 in time for the Third International Conference on Early Warning to be held in Bonn in March. Coordination on early warning was being organized in Perth, Australia, and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was also working on a tsunami early warning system for the Indian Ocean, which should be in place by 2006; there were plans for similar mechanisms to increase natural disaster capacity in the Mediterranean and Caribbean basins.

38. **Mr. Lorenzo** (Dominican Republic) asked the observer for the World Tourism Organization what means would be used to attain a balance between the development of tourism and the protection of natural resources. Regarding corporate and social responsibility, developing countries sometimes had to make their own decisions concerning economics and the consequences of large-scale tourism.

39. **Mr. de Villiers** (Observer for the World Tourism Organization) said that tourism must not only maintain environmental health, but also provide opportunities for both developing and developed countries to benefit

from the industry. The purpose of the Global Code of Ethics was to guide the various stakeholders on how tourism should move forward.

40. **Mr. Sopoaga** (Tuvalu) asked the Officer-in-Charge of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to explain the funding of the upcoming biennial programme of the Convention. There seemed to be no certainty that important activities would not be shelved if the funding situation did not improve, posing a serious threat to mitigation of and adaptation to climate change.

41. **Mr. Kinley** (Officer-in-Charge, United Nations Framework on Climate Change), said that the core budget had increased owing to changes in exchange rates but that its secretariat would need to carry out some fund-raising in order to finance certain activities. The Third World Participation Fund, however, had an excellent contribution record and would give extra support in the current year to the least developed and small island countries.

42. **Mr. Chowdhury** (Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States) said that an entire section of the Mauritius Strategy was devoted to its implementation. He had focused on that aspect of the outcome of the 10-year review process so as to prevent it from becoming mired in bureaucracy and thus losing momentum.

43. The Mauritius Strategy would be more effectively implemented if the regional intergovernmental organizations of the small island developing States were more actively involved in the process; since they were most familiar with the capacities of the countries in their respective regions, they could be more proactive in monitoring the implementation process. In that endeavour, they should be supported by the relevant United Nations agencies so that the States concerned could harness their full potential for efficient follow-up of the Mauritius Strategy. Regional meetings — three of which had been held in October in the Caribbean, Pacific, and Atlantic, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and South China regions — would prepare implementation measures and culminate in the interregional meeting shortly to be held in Rome, which was expected to define specific implementation measures.

44. Small island developing States must be enabled to shoulder responsibility for their own development, as spelled out in the Mauritius Strategy. The United Nations Resident Coordinator system should help individual States, upon request, to prepare nationally prioritized implementation plans, in which civil society and the private sector were fully involved and those efforts should be supplemented by development partners, in fulfilment of their Mauritius commitments. Otherwise the discouraging experience of national implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action would be repeated.

45. The Secretary-General had stressed the importance of advocacy and mobilization of international support for mainstreaming small island developing States' implementation of the Mauritius Strategy. The strong support for those States' development objectives, as reflected in the World Summit Outcome, had boosted United Nations efforts in that regard. His Office had initiated its advocacy and support mobilization efforts at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in January 2005, the thirteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development in April, the sixty-first annual ministerial meeting of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in May, and the Second South Summit in June. His Office had been developing collaboration with the Bretton Woods institutions, regional financial institutions, the Global Environmental Facility and other partners.

46. His Office had been actively raising awareness of the new and emerging issues identified in the Mauritius Strategy at multilateral forums and highlighting small island developing States' interests, especially in the areas of trade preferences, information and communication technology, and HIV/AIDS. He urged all other relevant organizational partners to assume their responsibilities in those areas.

47. Turning to agenda item 85 (c), he said that the report of the Secretary-General (A/60/180) provided an overview of the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and the follow-up activities relating to the Kobe World Conference. That was a subject of particular relevance to the least developed and small island developing States, with limited capacities, whose uphill struggle to attain sustainable development was regularly thwarted by natural disasters. As reflected in the Hyogo Framework for Action, those usually most affected by natural

disasters were the poor and socially disadvantaged in developing countries.

48. Recent events had shown only too clearly that natural disasters affected islands and continents with equal fury and devastation. In the case of the most vulnerable countries, the impact was magnified because of their limited areas of shelter and low resilience capacity to deal with the aftermath at any level, let alone embark on reconstruction and rehabilitation. The tolerance of victims was stretched to its limits in their attempts to return to normal pre-disaster life. Just as disaster risk had been recognized as a priority topic in the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010, the issue of small island developing States' reaction to disasters had been taken into account in the Mauritius Strategy.

49. He welcomed the fact that regional organizations, resources, capacity and expertise in disaster management were involved in the implementation of the Hyogo Framework and that the African Union had acknowledged the African regional strategy for disaster risk management. Further work was being done at the subregional level: in the Pacific region with the assistance of the South Pacific Allied Geoscience Commission, and in the Caribbean with that of the Organization of American States. But international, regional and subregional efforts needed to go hand in hand with national initiatives. Several countries, including Bangladesh, Mauritius and Uganda, had incorporated disaster risk measures into their common country assessments and United Nations development assistance frameworks. All least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States should emulate that example.

50. Progress on establishing early warning systems was heartening, especially in the wake of the Asian tsunami. His Office was working on the issues of disaster insurance and operationalization of the Emergency Fund for Disasters, both of particular interest to small island developing States.

51. **Mr. Blake** (Jamaica), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and referring to the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (A/60/261 and Corr.1), said that over the past 15 years the international community had worked out an extensive plan, covering a wide range of development-related areas, to enable developing countries to achieve sustained economic growth and sustainable development. The Economic and Social Council was responsible for monitoring and guiding implementation of the different agreements, through the Commission on Sustainable Development, which had agreed to focus on water, sanitation and human settlements in its first two-year cycle. The Secretary-General's report had indicated positive elements but had also highlighted more negative issues, particularly the challenge to ensure effective follow-up to policy decisions concerning the focus areas, and the need to provide national and local authorities with financial and technical assistance for dealing effectively with sewage and waste water. The call for donor Governments and international financial institutions to provide funding to assist developing countries to implement the decisions of the Commission's thirteenth session was therefore very welcome.

52. It appeared that some 300 partnerships had been registered with the Commission's secretariat, mainly among Governments or intergovernmental organizations; but there were few partnerships within the private sector or between the public and the private sectors. Yet the involvement of the private sector would generate new financial and technical resources. The report also referred to the role of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), inter-agency collaborative mechanisms and the refinement of the Commission's working methods. The Group of 77 and China would like to be assured that no innovation would affect the nature of the Commission or the responsibility of Governments to determine policy and give policy guidance and direction.

53. The report of the Secretary-General on the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (A/60/401) provided very useful information on coordination and rationalization efforts within the United Nations system and the agencies active in different aspects of the Mauritius Strategy. Nevertheless, no activity had been identified in the area of global governance, including trade and finance, to enhance coherence and create the improved international enabling environment. The Group of 77 and China hoped that, with the recognition of the

special needs and vulnerabilities of small island developing States by the 2005 World Summit and the reaffirmation of commitments to take urgent and concrete action to address them through the full and effective implementation of the Mauritius Strategy, there would be a more positive response from all international institutions and donor Governments.

54. From the report of the Secretary-General on implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (A/60/180), the Group of 77 and China took particular note that the international financial institutions were called upon to integrate the goals of the Hyogo Framework into their own strategies and to operate within existing coordination mechanisms, such as the United Nations Development Group. The quick response of the international community to develop an early warning system for tsunamis in the Indian Ocean was appreciated. The substantial additional effort and resources needed to create a fully fledged multihazard early warning system should be viewed in the context of the costs associated with failing to do so. The recommendations in the report should be updated to take into account the 2005 World Summit Outcome.

55. Protection of the global climate was one of the most important issues facing the international community, but one on which positions were still sharply divided. According to the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of United Nations environmental conventions (A/60/171), 123 developing countries had already presented their initial national communication on implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the parties had reaffirmed their commitments to implementing the frameworks for capacity-building in developing countries. Despite the optimism shown at the tenth session of the Conference of the Parties, there was a very low level of consensus less than two weeks before the eleventh session of the Conference of the Parties and the first meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol.

56. There was concern about the underlying message in the Secretary-General's report regarding the continuing challenges relating to resources, in the light of the current food situation in Africa, the challenge to meet the Millennium Development Goals, and the emphasis placed on agriculture and rural development at the 2005 World Summit. At a time when the United Nations was launching the International Year of Deserts and Desertification, there remained a huge gap between commitments made at the highest political level and action at the level of the Conference of the Parties and at the national level. The continued arrears in contributions was even more alarming and the Executive Secretary of the Convention should be authorized to enter into arrangements with any developing country party with unpaid contributions for two or more years which so wished, to unilaterally agree on a schedule of payments for such a party, to clear all outstanding unpaid contributions within six years, depending on the financial circumstances of that party, and to pay future contributions on time. It was vital to the development of several developing countries that the General Assembly act decisively on the issue.

57. **Mr. Thompson** (United Kingdom), speaking on behalf of the European Union; the acceding countries Bulgaria and Romania; the candidate countries Turkey and Croatia; the stabilization and association process countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; and, in addition, Liechtenstein, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, recalled that the 2005 World Summit Outcome had reaffirmed that comprehensive sustainable development was a key element of the overarching framework of United Nations activities. The European Union was strongly committed to working with international partners to ensure effective implementation of the corresponding commitments at all levels. While the General Assembly was not the only forum that needed to address those issues, it was a very important one that provided guidelines for all major stakeholders and could send a clear message regarding the intention to follow up on the decisions taken at the 2005 World Summit. The Second Committee could usefully build upon the Summit outcomes and the thirteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development in the area of priority policies and actions concerning water, sanitation and human settlements.

58. The European Union welcomed the agreement at the 2005 World Summit to explore a more coherent institutional framework for environmental activities within the United Nations system, including a more integrated structure building on existing institutions, in the context of current efforts to strengthen the Organization. It also supported transforming the United Nations Environment Programme into a specialized

agency, based in Nairobi, with a strengthened mandate and stable, adequate financing.

59. The European Union's Water Initiative and Water Facility, launched at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, remained the framework for its efforts to promote more sustainable global use of available water resources. The focus was on reinforcing political commitment to action and promoting improved water governance and management. The European Union remained committed to assisting developing countries' efforts to prepare integrated water resources management plans as part of their national development strategies.

60. Small island developing States faced special environmental and developmental challenges and the Mauritius Declaration and Strategy provided a valuable blueprint for future international support for and collaboration with such States.

61. In the area of disaster reduction, the challenge was to transform Member States' commitments into action in developing countries where assistance was most needed. More needed to be done to reduce the burden of disasters on the poor and the most vulnerable; the focus must be on preventive rather than reactive measures, by taking into account the likely consequences of climate change. The establishment of a worldwide early warning system for all natural hazards was a step in that direction. The European Union had been discussing how to improve coordination of its own disaster reduction efforts, but it remained committed to contributing to an increased international effort.

62. The Kyoto Protocol would enter into force shortly; it was important that it was fully operationalized and that its targets were met as an essential first step towards addressing the challenge of climate change. The European Community and the member States of the European Union had put in place comprehensive measures to attain their Kyoto Protocol targets and were committed to exploring the development of a post-2012 arrangement.

63. At the World Summit on Sustainable Development, commitments had been made to diversify energy supply by developing alternative energy technologies and increasing the global share of renewable energy sources. It was particularly necessary to mainstream sustainable energy solutions within global energy policy. Further commitments had been made at the 2005 World Summit and the European Union looked forward to making tangible progress towards fulfilling those commitments, in particular through the energy focus of the current cycle of the Commission on Sustainable Development. It remained committed to improving access to affordable, reliable and sustainable energy services and was working in that direction.

64. The United Nations Convention to Combat Diversification was a key instrument for highlighting the linkages between poverty and land degradation. The latest Millennium Ecosystem Assessment highlighted the importance of biodiversity in supporting human well-being and the critical rate at which biodiversity was being lost. Urgent efforts were needed to ensure implementation of commitments under the Convention on Biological Diversity and other international agreements. More needed to be done to mainstream biodiversity into sectoral policies and into poverty reduction strategies. Also, tangible progress was needed in negotiating an international regime on access and benefit-sharing. In addition, there must be urgent action against immediate threats to biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

65. Lastly, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) had an important role to play in assisting Member States to monitor and achieve Millennium Development Goal 11 on slum-dwellers and the targets on water and sanitation. With regard to environmentally sustainable human settlements, further improvements were needed in the areas of strategic planning, management and resource mobilization. The development of a medium-term strategic and institutional plan could build a more focused, effective organization and it was important to restore the centrality of the two global campaigns as the driving and organizing framework for all UN-Habitat activities.

66. **Mr. Jenie** (Indonesia) speaking on behalf of the member countries of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that sustainable development was embraced by governments, international and regional organizations and civil society. Nevertheless, poverty was a dominant concern of developing countries and sustained economic growth was the best tool to mobilize resources that could raise living standards, provide adequate health and education facilities, and promote environmental protection. While each country had the primary

responsibility for its own economic and social development, national policies and development strategies needed to be complemented by international and regional efforts. Developed countries should redouble their efforts to create an enabling international framework which recognized different stages of development and the lack of financial, institutional and technological capacity. Such a framework would maximize the positive effects of globalization for each country and ensure an equitable multilateral trading system which would stimulate development worldwide and benefit countries at all stages of development. Developed countries should also make specific efforts to reach the target of 0.7 per cent of GNP for official development assistance.

67. The Asia-Pacific region contained two thirds of the world's poor; strong political will and bold decisive action were needed to achieve sustainable development and eradicate poverty. Regional and global partnerships and cooperation were crucial for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. However, regional cooperation needed to be linked with international cooperation to ensure programme synergy. To that end, ASEAN had initiated closer collaboration with the United Nations system and regional development agencies and was trying to catalyse intraregional initiatives for achieving the Goals through the development of an ASEAN Millennium Development Compact.

68. Developing countries could not attain sustainable development objectives unless natural disasters were addressed effectively. ASEAN had concluded an Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response in July 2005, to provide a legally binding regional framework for implementing disaster-reduction activities.

69. Sustainable development and poverty reduction were adversely affected by rising world oil prices. The ASEAN countries were now giving high priority to promoting energy efficiency, particularly in the transportation and industrial sectors, and to developing renewable energy sources, including by exploring different energy mixes. In view of the region's commitment to increase the share of renewable energy in power generation in the region to 10 per cent by 2010, ASEAN had agreed to promote public-private partnerships to encourage the development of alternative energy sources.

70. ASEAN welcomed the entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol and would participate actively in the first meeting of the parties to the Protocol in Montreal. Lastly, the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-Building should be implemented immediately through concrete actions with adequate and stable funding and South-South cooperation projects should be promoted in the context of the Plan.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.

United Nations A/C.2/60/SR.21

General Assembly
Sixtieth session

Official Records

Distr.: General
2 December 2005

Original: English

Second Committee

Summary record of the 21st meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 2 November 2005, at 2.30 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Toscano (Vice-Chairman) ..... Switzerland

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05-58331 (E)

In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Toscano (Switzerland), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 2.30 p.m.

Expression of sympathy on the death of the Executive Secretary of the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

1. **The Chairman**, on behalf of Committee members, expressed sadness at the passing away of Ms. Joke Waller-Hunter, the Executive Secretary of the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Agenda item 52: Sustainable development (A/60/3, A/60/25 and Add.1, A/60/79, A/60/111, A/60/129, A/60/336 and A/60/167)

(a) Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (*continued*) (A/60/115, A/60/158 and A/60/261)

(b) Follow-up to and implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (*continued*) (A/60/401)

(c) International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (*continued*) (A/60/180)

(d) Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind (*continued*) (A/60/171)

(e) Sustainable development in mountain regions (*continued*) (A/60/309)

(f) Promotion of new and renewable sources of energy, including the implementation of the World Solar Programme 1996-2005 (*continued*) (A/60/82 and A/60/154)

(g) Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa (*continued*) (A/60/169 and A/60/171)

(h) Convention on Biological Diversity (*continued*) (A/60/171)

(i) Rendering assistance to poor mountain countries to overcome obstacles in socio-economic and ecological areas (*continued*)

2. **Mr. Grigore** (Republic of Moldova), speaking on behalf of Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and the Republic of Moldova (GUAM), welcomed the agreements reached at the 2005 World Summit on water and sanitation, climate change, biodiversity, transfer of technology and capacity-building. The Second Committee would have a vital role to play in promoting their implementation. The national programmes and strategies of the four GUAM countries to follow up the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg Plan of Implementation) and Agenda 21 took an integrated and coordinated approach to achieving sustainable development. Their main objectives were poverty eradication, improving consumption and production patterns, protection and sustainable use of natural resources and capacity-building.

3. Commending the measures undertaken by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination in coordinating system-wide sustainable development activities, he stressed the need for an even more coherent, coordinated and integrated environmental institutional framework. Certain elements of the existing mechanism, particularly the Global Environment Facility and the Commission on Sustainable Development, should be strengthened.

4. The GUAM States welcomed the entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol. They looked forward to both the eleventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the first meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol. A more inclusive and participatory international framework for climate change beyond 2012, based on lessons learned and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, would be vital. They hailed the 2005 World Summit commitments with regard to land degradation and desertification. The International Year of Deserts and Desertification should provide an opportunity to strengthen the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in

Africa, and implement it in the larger context of the Framework Convention on Climate Change.

5. The GUAM States welcomed the adoption of the Hyogo Declaration and the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters and supported the view that development strategies should incorporate disaster risk reduction and be tailored to local needs. It agreed with the Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction that investment in disaster risk reduction would enhance sustainable development and the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance. They were in favour of GUAM welcomed the increased focus on capacity-building and knowledge-sharing in the design of disaster risk reduction measures, and ongoing efforts to enhance coordination throughout the Organization. The United Nations system should take the lead in implementing the provisions of the Hyogo Framework. The GUAM States looked forward to the results of the work of the United Nations Development Group in strengthening United Nations country teams in developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

6. The expansion of renewable energy development in developing countries and countries with economies in transition was a very positive development. He stressed the need for continued international research on the application of renewable energy technologies, and the importance of addressing institutional capacity gaps and developing human capacity through awareness-raising, education and knowledge transfer. The Global Environment Facility and the international financial institutions, including the World Bank Group, must make every effort to increase the access of countries with economies in transition to technology and financing.

7. Lastly, he stressed the importance of the outcome of the thirteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development for policy actions with regard to water, sanitation and human settlements. The GUAM States looked forward to the review year under the Commission's current cycle and hoped that the Commission's fourteenth and fifteenth sessions would witness progress in the areas of energy, sustainable industrial development and climate under the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

8. **Mr. Noghès** (Monaco) said that ecological degradation aggravated poverty and threatened the survival of the human race. His delegation looked forward to achieving significant progress during the International Decade for Action, "Water for Life", 2005-2015. Agreeing with the Secretary-General and UNEP that safeguarding the environment was key to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and those of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, he urged Member States to mainstream environmental protection into all issues before the international community.

9. Disaster reduction, too, was an integral part of sustainable development and a prerequisite to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Monaco had offered assistance to the victims of the tsunami in South Asia, the famine in the Niger, the flooding in Guatemala and the earthquake in Pakistan. It had also supported national non-governmental organizations providing humanitarian assistance to populations affected by natural disasters.

10. Aware of the high percentage of natural disasters brought on by climate risk, Monaco would shortly be ratifying the Kyoto Protocol, introducing emissions reduction measures at home and, at the international level, participating in flexibility mechanisms to implement specific cooperation projects with developing countries or countries in transition within the framework of the Clean Development Mechanism and joint implementation. In connection with the International Year of Deserts and Desertification, 2006, the Principality would continue to support the multi-country projects of the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. Thus far, it had helped to finance three projects in five African countries — Algeria, Burkina Faso, Mali, the Niger and Tunisia. It had also engaged in activities to combat desertification in the context of its bilateral cooperation with Morocco and the Niger.

11. The proliferation of environmental protection institutions and instruments highlighted the need to establish an integrated structure for coordinating all actions. Better circulation of information and clear and effective action were essential to addressing such a cross-cutting theme. Monaco supported proposals put forward at the High-level Plenary Meeting to convert UNEP into the United Nations environmental organization.

12. **Mr. Alim** (Bangladesh) said that disaster-prone countries must have access to timely and unrestricted

early-warning information. Under its Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme, Bangladesh, a disaster-prone country, had adopted a more comprehensive risk reduction culture encompassing disaster preparedness, early warning, risk reduction, prevention, mitigation and development. A number of financial mechanisms were in place to address the needs of disaster victims, including agricultural credit, microcredit and community funds. Disaster reduction strategies had also been mainstreamed into the country's poverty reduction strategy paper.

13. Bangladesh had been one of the first countries to institute a national platform on risk reduction. Part of the Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme, the platform formed the basis for the Corporate Plan — A Framework for Action 2005-2009, which focused on professionalizing the disaster management system; mainstreaming disaster management and building strategic partnerships; empowering communities; expanding risk reduction across a broader range of hazards; and strengthening emergency response systems.

14. Nonetheless, its efforts to address the human, material and economic challenges of natural disaster were hampered by insufficient resources and technology. Bangladesh, in a high-risk earthquake zone and vulnerable to frequent cyclones, hoped to receive international cooperation for the construction of a state-of-the-art disaster warning system in the Bay of Bengal.

15. **Mr. Berrah** (Algeria) noted with satisfaction that the International Year of Deserts and Desertification, 2006 was giving greater visibility to its programmes through its very public profile and the involvement of internationally recognized figures. Regional efforts to combat desertification required major technical and financial support that could not be furnished by developing countries alone. The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification would benefit from linkages between soil degradation and the Millennium Development Goals and from closer synergies with the sustainable development conventions and other competent organizations.

16. Regional and subregional cooperation in combating desertification were particularly vital in Africa, where desertification threatened agriculture and, thus, food security, two issues of major concern for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the African Union. The agricultural sector accounted for about 40 per cent of the GDP in African countries and was a major source of jobs and poverty reduction. The NEPAD Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme was now widely integrated in the national agricultural development plans of African countries.

17. Under Algeria's National Agricultural and Rural Development Plan, agriculture was playing a more dynamic role in achieving sustainable growth and addressing the problems of soil degradation and food insecurity. At the international level, Algeria was attempting to sensitize development partners to the importance of research and the transfer of appropriate technologies. It was emphasizing, in particular, the systematic observation of land degradation in the affected areas, early warning systems and additional financing for the implementation of the Convention.

18. It was encouraging that desertification was now an issue before various international forums and organs, including the Commission on Sustainable Development, which had identified it as one of the issues in the thematic clusters to be subject to an evaluation during the 2008-2009 cycle. He was pleased to announce that Algeria would be hosting a high-level world summit on protecting deserts and combating desertification, to coincide with the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the entry into force of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.

19. **Mr. Tesfu** (Ethiopia) said that, in an effort to implement the globally agreed goals and targets relating to water, sanitation and human settlements, his country had constructed and rehabilitated rural and urban water supplies. At 37.9 per cent, access by its population to clean and fresh water in 2003/04 had been slightly higher than the figure for the previous year.

20. The voluntary resettlement programme in the rural areas had reduced pressure on natural resources and directly and indirectly restored benefits to the ecosystem. In accordance with the Johannesburg Declaration and Plan of Implementation, Ethiopia had begun the process of slum upgrading in the urban areas. Home ownership for low-income groups had been promoted through targeted subsidies and by empowering and building the capacity of local communities in such special skills as participatory housing provision, slum upgrading, poverty alleviation

and income generation. Significant progress had been made in promoting good urban governance through decentralization, local government reforms and the participation of civil society in governance and habitat management. UN-Habitat had played a vital role in mobilizing resources for the implementation of the Habitat Agenda in Ethiopia.

21. Ethiopia's National Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy Programme recognized the importance of environmental protection, sustainable production and energy consumption, disaster prevention and preparedness. It accorded priority in three areas addressing land degradation, deforestation, overgrazing, soil erosion, loss of soil fertility and disruption of the hydrological cycle, in particular in highly degraded drought-prone and food-insecure areas; strengthening regulatory and institutional capacity and natural resource preservation and management; and promoting the sustainable use of biodiversity resources.

22. In recent years, his country had made significant strides in implementing the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. Its national action programme was aimed at raising public awareness of desertification and monitoring the effects of drought. Environmental science had been incorporated into the school curriculum, and environmental clubs had been launched with public and private support. Implementation of the early warning system and drought mitigation capacity had been strengthened, and the national Government had formed a crisis management group to take immediate action in the event of a natural disaster.

23. Thus far, Ethiopia had made every effort to address the development issues highlighted in the Commission's first two-year implementation cycle in an integrated and comprehensive manner without seeking too much in the way of external financial or technical assistance; however, it had not been possible to mobilize sufficient funds to implement its national action plan. Without increased international partnership, it would be unable to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

24. **Mr. Wang** Qi (China) said that the global trend of environmental degradation had yet to be reversed, and a large number of developing countries, in their efforts to achieve sustainable development, were still faced with severe constraints in terms of financial resources and technology. In order to bring about a positive momentum for international sustainable development, it was essential to implement the targets and plans set at the World Summit on Sustainable Development. The global agenda for sustainable development had to be translated into national strategies, and Governments should formulate those strategies in accordance with national conditions, and implement them by using economic, legal and administrative means in an integrated manner, mobilizing the entire society and establishing an extensive partnership. The international community must create a sound external environment for the sustainable development of developing countries and give them a reasonable space in which to develop their policies. The developed countries should provide them with assistance in terms of financial resources, technology and capacity-building and the international community should establish a monitoring and facilitation mechanism for that purpose. Global environmental issues at the regional level must be treated as a priority, especially such problems as the shortage of water resources, urban air pollution, soil erosion, desertification, natural disasters and environmental degradation.

25. China had adopted a scientific approach to development that was people-centred, comprehensive, harmonious and sustainable. It had formulated its own Agenda 21 and programme of action for sustainable development in the early twenty-first century. It was also setting up, on a pilot basis, a development appraisal system called the "green gross domestic product". China had invested much effort in developing a recycling economy, promoting clean production and raising awareness of the need to practise economy in an attempt to introduce a new production and consumption mode that was energy-efficient, reduced pollution and promoted the economical use of resources and environmental protection. During the forthcoming eleventh five-year plan period, China would continue with the new industrialization model, integrating industrialization into sustainable development and using the protection of resources and improvement of the environment as both important means and ultimate ends of development.

26. It was extremely urgent to enhance the monitoring and early warning capacity of developing countries regarding major natural disasters, to which

they were particularly vulnerable. China hoped that the international community, and in particular the developed countries, would proceed from humanitarian considerations and help the developing countries with their capacity-building in the prevention of, reduction of and preparedness for natural disasters. In the aftermath of the Indian Ocean tsunami, China had launched the largest external assistance operation in its history. In September 2005, the Chinese Government and relevant United Nations agencies had jointly sponsored the Asian Conference on Disaster Reduction at which the Beijing Action for Disaster Risk Reduction in Asia had been adopted.

27. The key to solving problem of climate change lay in technological innovation and its transfer and dissemination. In order to carry out flexible and practical international cooperation it was necessary to seek an innovative international regime to mobilize the enthusiasm of countries to participate in efforts to address climate change and to remove obstacles to international cooperation, including the transfer of technology.

28. The Chinese Government had always supported the development of renewable sources of energy through such measures as tax benefits and investment subsidies, and its small hydroelectric power, wind power, solar heating and biomass gas and power generation technologies were ready for large-scale commercialization. China's law on renewable energy, which would enter into force on 1 January 2006, would create a more enabling policy environment for the market application, technological advancement and industrial development of renewable energy. The Beijing International Renewable Energy Conference, to be held, in November 2005, would further facilitate international cooperation and would contribute to the promotion of renewable energy around the world.

29. Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification had been frustrated owing to a shortage of funds and a malfunctioning fund operation mechanism. The international community must pay attention to desertification from the perspective of the global environment and explore a mutually beneficial mechanism for the transfer of technology that would be conducive to the implementation of the Convention. The developed countries should fulfil their Convention obligation of providing the developing countries with financial assistance and technological support.

30. China had ratified the Convention on Biological Diversity and approved the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. It stood ready to join other States parties in striving for their effective implementation so as to ensure that while mankind reaped maximum benefits from the development and application of biotechnology, any risks to the environment, biological diversity and human health would be minimized.

31. **Mr. Alsaker** (Norway) said that his Government, which placed great emphasis on the environment agenda both within Norway and internationally, would like to see a stronger United Nations follow-up of the agenda. It endorsed the call in the 2005 World Summit Outcome for a more coherent framework for environmental activities in the United Nations system, and would like stronger links between the system's normative work and its operational activities. It was important to build upon existing institutions such as the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Establishing a United Nations environmental organization would be instrumental in promoting sustainable development. Due respect should be given to the legal autonomy of the multilateral environment agreements.

32. His Government had been pleased to note the increased cooperation between the conventions related to biological diversity, but a greater effort would have to be made if the 2010 target was to be reached. The fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the use of genetic resources provided an important means for achieving sustainable development. The developed countries wanted the countries that were rich in genetic resources — for the most part developing countries — to protect that diversity in the common interest, and with that in view the users of genetic resources should share the benefits arising from their commercial application with the countries providing the resources. The aim of the international regime on access and benefit-sharing launched by the parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity was to ensure that the countries and indigenous people providing genetic resources were compensated through monetary and non-monetary benefits, which would in turn be an incentive for them to preserve their biological diversity. Norway, as both a provider and a user country of genetic resources, would play an active and constructive part in the negotiations.

33. His delegation hoped that the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, to be held in Brazil in March 2006, would reach agreement on identification requirements for shipments of genetically modified organisms, which would allow importing countries to verify that the genetically modified organisms they received were in fact those they had agreed to import and would also provide the biotechnology industry with a level playing field with respect to trade in genetically modified organisms. Norway urged those countries that had not yet ratified the Cartagena Protocol to do so.

34. His Government would increase its efforts in the field of development and utilization of renewable energy and work with international partners to increase access to sustainable energy with a view to achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

35. The Kyoto Protocol was but a first, modest step towards stabilizing greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere, and much more would be required if dangerous human interference with the climate system was to be prevented. Above all, there needed to be a truly global effort where all countries played their part in accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. Norway hoped that the first meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, to be held in Montreal from 28 November to 9 December 2005, would succeed in establishing a broad process towards agreeing on a global climate regime from 2012 onwards.

36. **Ms. Soto** (Costa Rica) said that the protection, conservation and sustainable use of natural resources were necessary in order to achieve a high level of development. Furthermore, international cooperation and the exchange of successful experiences with respect to environmental protection were essential. It was important to acknowledge the fundamental role that forests played in protecting the environment. The Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change recognized only one of the many benefits provided by forests, namely carbon sequestration. Article 3.3 of the Protocol was restrictive. In order to obtain greater benefits from the Clean Development Mechanism, it would appear that countries must first suffer deforestation instead of protecting their primary forests and preventing deforestation in the first place. The international community should provide adequate incentives to developing countries. Her country, along with Papua New Guinea and other developing countries, had founded the Rainforest Coalition with the goal of channelling funds obtained through the carbon and forest product markets to sustainable development and poverty eradication.

37. The primary industry in her country, tourism, was based on the non-consumptive use of its biodiversity. Thus, the sustainable use of its natural resources was a source of wealth. Her country also promoted community-based rural tourism, which contributed to the preservation of local traditions, supported the development of rural communities and provided additional sources of income.

38. Sustainable activities should protect resources in the marine areas outside national jurisdiction. Accordingly, until an appropriate legal instrument had been adopted, her country was insisting on a moratorium on bottom-trawling.

39. Her country was pleased that the Kyoto Protocol had finally entered into force early in 2005, and it encouraged countries which had not yet ratified the Protocol to do so. In September 2005 her country had hosted the Second International Expert Meeting on the 10-Year Framework of Programmes for Sustainable Consumption and Production. The report of the meeting would be submitted to the Commission on Sustainable Development at its fourteenth session. Participants at the Meeting had discussed, inter alia, the need to consider the cost of inaction when setting policies, since in many cases remediation could prove more expensive than work undertaken at the outset. International cooperation and the transfer of environmentally sound technologies were essential in that regard.

40. Her country had developed a legal framework to promote research on and the use of renewable resources that were environmentally friendly and facilitated sustainable development. She described some of its national efforts in that regard.

41. **Mr. Gass** (Switzerland) said that the common future of the world could not be envisaged without sustainable development, which reconciled protection and development of the environment, economic development and social progress. His delegation shared the Secretary-General's view that the United Nations system lacked coherence in the governance of international environmental activities, and it therefore

welcomed the decision of heads of State and Government to explore the possibility of setting up a more coherent institutional framework, including a more integrated structure that built on existing institutions and internationally agreed instruments, as well as treaty bodies and specialized agencies. It hoped that in the follow-up process all options, including that of creating a United Nations organization for the environment, would be studied.

42. Switzerland called on those industrialized countries that had not already ratified the Kyoto Protocol to do so, and expressed the hope that the first meeting of the Parties to the Protocol and the eleventh Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Montreal in November and December 2005, would initiate a process defining the commitment of the industrialized countries and starting a discussion on the effective and equitable participation of developing countries. It was essential to ensure that the system set up to combat climate change included those countries whose absolute emissions accounted for an important proportion of overall emissions.

43. The Convention to Combat Desertification had important achievements to its credit, including the establishment of action plans and programmes and the evaluation of the advance of the desert, but recent debate had often focused on financial resources or on the activities of multilateral institutions, role-sharing and responsibilities, while the efforts of the countries affected were often underestimated. That lack of vision threatened to cost the international community dear, and his delegation hoped that the beginning of the Convention's second decade would be marked by a renewal of the constructive spirit and solidarity that had prevailed during its negotiation.

44. Switzerland was actively engaged in programmes on sustainable consumption and production, as decided at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, and had set up a working group whose aim was to surmount the obstacles faced by Governments desiring to pursue a policy of sustainable public procurement that was beneficial to the environment, economy and social progress. All interested countries were invited to take part.

45. Turning to the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, he said that the Hyogo Framework for Action (2005-2015) must be implemented at the local, national and international levels with a view to substantially reducing damage from natural disasters by promoting a culture of prevention. An integrated approach had to be adopted, with the participation of all stakeholders, equal account being taken of the mechanisms of prevention, emergency response and recovery. Disaster reduction must be based on recognized principles of good governance, such as participation, transparency and fairness. His delegation supported the measures proposed by the Secretary-General in his report on implementing the International Strategy, especially strengthening it as a system.

46. The issue of sustainable development in mountain regions remained at the heart of Switzerland's concerns. Regional agreements were working well, but much remained to be done. Ways must be found to eradicate the poverty that all too often afflicted mountain communities, for example by compensating them for the ecological services they provided to populations in the lowlands. His delegation hoped that the Secretary-General's next report would provide a more analytical and substantial approach, particularly in that area.

47. **Mr. Koonjul** (Mauritius), speaking on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), noted that the report of the Secretary-General (A/60/401) recognized that there had been little time for an exchange of views among members of the United Nations inter-agency consultative group on small island developing States for the articulation of a comprehensive plan, as requested in General Assembly resolution 59/311, for the full and effective implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. The Alliance noted that the initial response of a number of agencies was still to be received, and that the matrix presented in the report was a reflection of the limited response. The three Alliance regions had now completed their review meetings to follow up on implementation of the Mauritius Strategy. A number of delegates had encountered difficulties in their travel arrangements to attend the review meetings, and the Pacific regional group and the regional group for the Atlantic, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and South China Seas (AIMS) deplored the failure of the Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries,

Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States to attend their meetings.

48. The Caribbean region had given particular attention to capacity-building, the need for technical support to develop national sustainable development strategies and suitable indicators, and the need for a supportive network of experts that could be seconded for limited durations for specific tasks. The region had stressed the importance of developing national sustainable development policies on the basis of the Barbados model. The Pacific region had stressed the need for collective cooperation and partnership as an essential element in implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy. It had also agreed that the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy must be nationally driven and coordinated. The AIMS region had focused on the Millennium Development Goals and the need to adjust them to national circumstances in view of the significant disparities in their levels of development and their capacity for adaptation. It had been agreed that three parallel processes would be pursued: the development of technical plans for the AIMS group, proposals for a more formal management framework, and fund-raising for implementing the technical programme and ensuring appropriate participation at a future ministerial meeting.

49. The success of the three regional meetings had been due to the assistance and cooperation of the Small Island Developing States Unit of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. It was a cause of concern, however, to the Alliance that a number of the staff in that Unit were still funded by voluntary contributions. The Alliance had studied the situation and concluded that the strengthening of the Unit was of the utmost urgency and necessity, as had been agreed by the General Assembly in a number of resolutions. That would entail an increase in the number of permanent posts and a rationalization of the work of the United Nations on small island developing States. The Alliance was puzzled that although the General Assembly in each of its last four sessions had asked for the Unit to be strengthened, nothing had been done. The Unit was the primary focal point for small island developing States' work within the United Nations system and should establish a stronger working relationship with all the relevant agencies of the United Nations system, leading to the creation within them of focal points.

50. Poverty, drought, floods, rising temperatures and more intensive and more frequent hurricanes were all closely linked to climate change, and it was now clear that climate change was also responsible for an increase in the spread of diseases such as malaria. The work done by various United Nations agencies showed clearly that there was a need for immediate and comprehensive action. The small island developing States needed to be helped to adapt to climate change, and the relevant provision in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change should be fully implemented.

51. The small island developing States were having difficulties in attracting funding for Clean Development Mechanism projects. The Alliance would be raising the issue at the first meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol and the eleventh Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Montreal in November and December 2005, and would be requesting positive differentiation in their favour in respect of Clean Development Mechanism projects, not only because they were unable to attract investments but also because of the disproportionate impact of climate change on them.

52. The Alliance commended the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity for its efforts to develop an island biodiversity work programme and looked forward to the completion of its work on the special conditions of small island developing States.

53. The Alliance underlined the importance of implementing the Hyogo Declaration and the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015, particularly commitments relating to assistance to developing countries, including the small island developing States. It reiterated the need to assist disaster-prone and disaster-stricken countries in their risk reduction, post-disaster recovery and rehabilitation efforts. Many of the disaster-prone small island developing States were unable to secure appropriate insurance owing to the heavy costs they had incurred in previous disasters. That lack of access required particular attention.

54. The Alliance regarded the Mauritius Strategy as the strategic blueprint for attaining sustainable development and implementing the Millennium Development Goals at national level. It remained concerned, however, about the lack of specific, dedicated funding available to the small island

developing States for national strategies and hoped that the United Nations system would give thought to the need to make assistance for national sustainable development more appropriate and better adapted to national conditions.

55. **Mr. Sunaga** (Japan) said that his Government was contributing to the Hyogo Framework for Action in a number of ways. It was supporting the International Recovery Platform by setting up an office for knowledge management in Kobe in collaboration with the Asian Disaster Reduction Centre. It had also been supporting the speedy establishment of a tsunami early warning system for the Indian Ocean and, in cooperation with the United States, would continue to provide tsunami watch information issued by the Japan Meteorological Agency and the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center on request to Indian Ocean countries until the system became fully operational.

56. As had become clear during the drafting of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, an index for objectively measuring the vulnerability of small island developing States was needed. In order to enable donor countries to provide such States with more effective assistance, the international community should support the creation of such a vulnerability index.

57. The discussion on climate change needed to be expanded to consider action beyond 2012. To that end, Japan had been hosting informal meetings to encourage frank exchanges of views on possible further action on climate change, inviting government officials from both developed and developing countries. In addition, Japan had joined the Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate, a regional initiative aimed at promoting environmentally friendly development.

58. Turning to the issue of energy, he stressed the importance of expanding the use of natural gas and developing renewable sources of energy such as solar power. Finding cleaner sources of energy would also go a long way towards reducing the emission of greenhouse gases. Every effort should be made to improve energy efficiency through research and development. Japan would continue to support the transfer of technology to developing countries.

59. **Mr. de Rivero** (Peru) said that Peru had had its share of extreme weather phenomena, including El Niño, the last occurrence of which had cost billions of dollars in human and material losses. Peru therefore supported the Mauritius Strategy, particularly the provisions on climate change and sustainable development. His delegation welcomed the thorough analyses that were being conducted, in the context of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, on the technical and institutional links between climate change and disaster risk reduction. His delegation also attached great importance to the speedy implementation of the provisions of the Hyogo Framework for Action concerning the identification of weather-related disasters and the reduction of risks. Information on climate risks should be systematized, and coordination between the secretariats of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and the Framework Convention on Climate Change should be improved.

60. **Mr. Mubin** (Malaysia) said that Malaysia was committed to achieving the targets set out in the Johannesburg Programme of Implementation and Agenda 21 in accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibility and was taking appropriate actions to ensure that its development was sustainable and balanced. Among other things, Malaysia planned to transform the country into a world centre of excellence in conservation, research and utilization of tropical biological diversity by the year 2020. The many natural calamities and disasters of recent years were an indication of the need to pay serious attention to climate change, particularly global warming. His delegation called on all nations to become parties to the Kyoto Protocol. In order to reduce carbon emissions, Malaysia had taken measures to improve energy efficiency, reduce the burning of fuels and increase the use of renewable energy.

61. The majority of developing countries lacked the capacity and the financial resources needed to minimize the impact of natural disasters. The current solutions, bureaucratic methodologies, policy frameworks and government-to-government aid were not adequate and did not address the underlying problems. Poor nations needed sustainable economic and social development so as to enhance their resilience to natural disasters.

62. The international community should take measures to mitigate the impact of rising crude oil prices on the economies of developing countries. The United Nations could play a leading role by mobilizing

international cooperation in dealing with the issue. On the domestic front, Governments should be encouraged to adopt measures to reduce their dependence on diesel and petrol through conservation and increased use of natural gas and other alternative energy sources such as palm-oil-based biodiesel. Malaysia had already adopted several measures to help reduce its dependency on fossil fuel.

63. **Mr. Hannesson** (Iceland) said that Iceland, an island State, shared many of the concerns of small island developing States in the area of sustainable development. There was scope for cooperation in many areas, including the sustainable use of energy. At the International Meeting to Review Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States held in Mauritius in January 2005, the Government of Iceland had announced its decision to launch a special initiative to make available US$ 1 million in a special fund to support programmes on sustainable use of natural resources in small island developing States. Those funds would be used particularly in the fields of sustainable fisheries and renewable energy.

64. Iceland had taken steps to utilize its own geothermal energy potential and to share its expertise in a number of ways. Although almost all energy for stationary applications came from clean renewables, nearly 30 per cent of primary energy originated from imported fossil fuels. As only 20 per cent of the technically feasible hydropower had been harnessed, and only a small fraction of the country's geothermal potential available for electricity had been utilized, there was still a large untapped potential for using clean energy. The most promising option was to use electricity to make hydrogen for use as the primary energy carrier for ships and vehicles. Iceland was committed to working with others to develop that technology for the benefit of all. International consensus for sustainable energy solutions was necessary to accelerate technical innovations.

65. In November 2003, ministers from 15 countries and the European Union had announced the creation of the International Partnership for the Hydrogen Economy. His Government had offered Iceland as an international platform for hydrogen research and experimentation with a view to facilitating the sharing of its pioneering experiences.

66. **Mr. Daniel** (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), speaking on behalf of the members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) which were Members of the United Nations, said that the CARICOM countries attached tremendous importance to the Mauritius Strategy. At the recently concluded Caribbean Regional Meeting held in Saint Kitts and Nevis, agreement had been reached on the need for a regional coordinating mechanism for implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy. Efforts to define elements for such a mechanism were under way. The CARICOM countries welcomed the decision of the Commission on Sustainable Development to dedicate one day of its review sessions to a review of the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy, focusing on that year's thematic cluster and on any new developments relating to small island developing States.

67. CARICOM shared the concerns reflected in the report of the Secretary-General on the promotion of new and renewable sources of energy (A/60/154) regarding persistent energy poverty, the risk of climate change, air pollution, the rising demand for energy and the issue of natural-resource depletion. The expansion of electricity generation was a key aspect of economic development in the Caribbean countries, yet conventional methods of production through fossil fuel plants were among the most significant contributors to air, land and water pollution. To address those concerns, CARICOM countries had developed the Caribbean Renewable Energy Development Programme to prepare a regional project to remove barriers to the use of renewable energy and to foster its development and commercialization. CARICOM would welcome continued international support for that programme and would encourage the further promotion of awareness of renewable sources as an integral element of sustainable development.

68. CARICOM was taking a proactive approach in addressing the challenges and threats of climate change, which particularly affected small island developing States and low-lying coastal States. They had undertaken a regional project for mainstreaming adaptation to climate change and had established a Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre. The CARICOM countries would encourage a more proactive approach at the international level through the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol. They would support

sending a strong message to the first Meeting of Parties to the Kyoto Protocol and the eleventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention to develop a more inclusive international framework for stabilizing and reducing greenhouse gas emissions beyond the expiry of the Kyoto Protocol.

69. The CARICOM countries welcomed the adoption of the Hyogo Framework for Action and recognized their individual responsibilities for its implementation. CARICOM supported the recommendation of the Secretary-General in his report on Implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (A/60/180) to strengthen the Strategy system. Likewise they supported the recommendation on the strengthening of regional mechanisms for collaboration and networking in support of national and local efforts to reduce disaster risk. While acknowledging the need for integrating disaster risk reduction into development strategies, the CARICOM countries would like to emphasize the need for improved and rapid humanitarian response, especially financing. They were studying with great interest the proposal for an upgraded central emergency response fund, especially the proposal for setting aside funds for neglected emergencies. The recent experiences of Grenada and Guyana pointed to the need for readily available funding. Despite numerous appeals on behalf of the two countries, donor response had been inadequate, leaving the respective Governments to cope with very limited resources.

70. **Mr. Prabhu** (India) said that India was committed to the international regime represented by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol, which were the most appropriate tools to guide international efforts to protect global climate systems by reversing climate change in accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

71. India's policies for sustainable development promoted energy efficiency, renewable energy, changing the fuel mix to cleaner sources, energy pricing, pollution abatement, afforestation, mass transport, and differentially higher growth rates of less energy-intensive services sectors as compared to manufacturing. Although all countries must be responsible for national efforts to achieve sustainable development, international action was needed to make available to developing countries the means of implementation. Steps must be taken to make available financial resources, capacity-building and transfer of technology to developing countries. The intellectual property rights issue had been successfully addressed with regard to HIV/AIDS, and there was a similar need for it to be addressed with regard to technologies for energy efficiency and clean energy. A network of research and development institutes from developed and developing countries could be established to engage in research on new technologies, particularly those of interest to developing countries. All collaborative research and development work done through the network could be made available to developing countries free of charge.

72. His delegation welcomed the decision of the Johannesburg Summit to negotiate, within the framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity, an international regime to promote and safeguard the fair and equitable sharing of benefits from the utilization of genetic resources. It also approved of the decision taken at the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity to mandate the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Access and Benefit-sharing to negotiate an international regime in implementation of that decision. As a practical modality for benefit-sharing, the regime should include provisions for mandatory disclosure of the country of origin of genetic resources and prior informed consent in intellectual property applications. India strongly supported sui generis systems for the protection of traditional knowledge that had been developed over millennia so as to ensure that the holders of traditional knowledge fully shared in the benefits arising from the commercial utilization of such knowledge.

73. In the context of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, his delegation welcomed the inclusion of land degradation, desertification and deforestation as a focal area for financing by the Global Environment Facility. The effectiveness of those arrangements, however, would depend largely on the allocation of additional resources to that focal area for financing the needs of affected countries.

74. As to the Mauritius Strategy, his delegation looked forward to its timely and effective implementation. It also welcomed the steps that had been taken to strengthen inter-agency collaborative arrangements within the United Nations system. Inter-agency work on sustainable development should derive

from and closely follow the priorities set by the intergovernmental process.

75. **Mr. Mabhongo** (South Africa), speaking on behalf of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), said that the need to integrate social development, environmental protection and economic development had become increasingly pressing, and he underscored the importance of international cooperation to assist developing countries in meeting their sustainable development objectives.

76. The members of SADC agreed with the observation by the Secretary-General in his report contained in document A/60/261 that one challenge facing the international community was to ensure effective follow-up to the policy decisions on water, sanitation and human settlements adopted at the thirteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development and to continue refining the methods of work of the Commission. The true test of the work and relevance of the Commission would be the extent to which it had an impact on the implementation of its decisions. The issues to be considered next by the Commission — energy for sustainable development, industrial development, atmosphere/air pollution and climate change — were central to the efforts of developing countries to eradicate poverty and put their societies on a path to sustainable development. He provided examples of problems to which those issues had given rise in the SADC region.

77. The members of SADC also looked forward to the report of the Secretary-General on progress achieved in the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy and hoped that the report would contain recommendations for the full and effective implementation of the Strategy. All States should strive to enhance implementation with respect to all the issues to which he had referred earlier in his statement and should bear in mind the principle of common but differentiated responsibility. SADC members cooperated at the regional level to increase access to energy and strengthen economic integration, and they looked to the international community to provide increased support, especially for the transfer of technology and the provision of technical and financial resources. Donor countries in particular, as well as the international financial institutions, should increase their involvement, inter alia, by funding infrastructure.

78. The seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification had demonstrated the challenge posed by desertification and land degradation for developing countries, especially those in Africa, and SADC called for increased support for the Convention. The Community also was in favour of an adequate and robust replenishment of the Global Environment Facility Trust Fund. The Facility had made significant contributions to the financing of United Nations environmental conventions. Urgent steps should be taken to finalize the draft memorandum of understanding between the Facility and the Convention on land degradation.

79. The member States of SADC looked forward to the full implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building adopted at the twenty-third session of the Governing Council of UNEP. SADC would also continue to call for strengthening the United Nations Headquarters in Nairobi, which was the seat of both UNEP and UN-Habitat.

80. **Mr. Chaudhry** (Pakistan) said that 13 years after the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, with many international conferences in between, poverty, disease, underdevelopment and environmental degradation continued to defy the international community and in many cases the situation had deteriorated in the interim. In today's interdependent world, it was more important than ever to integrate economic growth, social development and environmental protection as mutually reinforcing pillars of sustainable development. It was now time for measures at all levels to implement internationally agreed development goals, including those related to sustainable development.

81. His delegation fully supported the call by the Secretary-General for donor Governments and international financial institutions to target funding support to developing countries in key policy options and practical measures as identified in the policy decisions of the Commission for Sustainable Development at its thirteenth session. It also attached considerable importance to the second implementation cycle of the Commission focusing on energy, climate change, industrial development and air pollution/atmosphere.

82. There was a clear relationship between natural disasters, rehabilitation and development. Natural disasters severely affected hard-earned developmental gains in developing countries. Sustainable development was therefore essential for better preparedness to deal with natural disasters. In order to ensure a smooth transition from relief to rehabilitation and development, humanitarian assistance should be provided in a manner that supported and facilitated long-term development. In that regard, his delegation welcomed the call by the Secretary-General in his report on the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (A/60/180) for the world community urgently to join forces to break the vicious circle between poverty and environmental degradation and natural disasters.

83. The decision of the 2005 World Summit on the full implementation of the Hyogo Declaration and Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 and the commitments related to assistance for developing countries in the post-disaster recovery and rehabilitation processes were also relevant. The unprecedented scale of death and destruction in Pakistan in the wake of the earthquake on 8 October 2005 had highlighted the need for a permanent mechanism at the international level, guided by the United Nations, which was able to respond quickly to such catastrophes and engage the international community in a well-planned reconstruction strategy.

84. In the context of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, his delegation welcomed the call in the 2005 World Summit Outcome for assistance to enable developing countries to integrate adaptation goals into their sustainable development strategies. It was crucial to change unsustainable patterns of production and consumption, particularly in the developed world, and to provide support, especially for capacity-building and technology transfer to developing countries. He described a number of significant environmental protection measures his country had adopted. United Nations agencies should coordinate their efforts for the timely implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building.

85. His country was fully committed to the implementation of Agenda 21, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and other internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

86. **Mr. Chulkov** (Russian Federation), noting that sustainable development was one of the highest priorities on the international agenda, said that his country intended to increase its contribution to resolving sustainable development problems internationally and nationally. The Russian Federation was in general satisfied with the results of the first two-year cycle of the multi-year programme of work of the Commission on Sustainable Development, which had made an important contribution to achievement of the aims of the World Summit on Sustainable Development with regard to water, sanitation and human settlements. In the next cycle, it would have to deal with the urgent and thorny problems of energy, climate, industrial development and atmospheric pollution. The Commission should be able to secure a consensus that took account of the multiplicity of specific differences and regions and to reach balanced and practically oriented decisions. There was, however, a need for further improvement in the preparation of the Commission's sessions.

87. His delegation noted with satisfaction the results of the twenty-third session of the Governing Council of UNEP, and especially the contribution of the Programme to study questions relating to water resources, sanitation, chemicals management and strengthening environmental emergency response. It greatly valued and supported enhancement of the United Nations Forum on Forests. With regard to the outcome of its fifth session, his delegation wished to emphasize the attention given to the strategic importance of the United Nations forest process in solving global problems of sustainable development and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The sixth session should secure a more comprehensive and coordinated advance of the agenda, and through using existing United Nations mechanisms move it to a qualitatively higher level of cooperation.

88. His delegation welcomed the outcome of the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and believed that future work should focus on increasing the efficiency of the implementation process, including activating the efforts of the small island developing States themselves, more effective use of international assistance, ensuring effective monitoring of implementation of the Mauritius Strategy, the

development of partnerships, and expanding the exchange of progressive experience.

89. The World Conference on Disaster Reduction had made an important contribution to the development of the agreed approaches to strengthening global preparedness. His delegation favoured the consistent integration of early warning mechanisms into development planning programmes and considered the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction to be an integral part of efforts at all levels on behalf of the timely achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. It welcomed the Secretary-General's interesting proposals to create tools for tracking progress in achieving the objectives of the new renewed Strategy and to improve the mechanisms for its management. The Russian Federation was ready to play an active part in agreeing on ways of tackling that task.

90. His delegation supported the attention given by the United Nations to the sustainable development of mountain regions and believed that the emphasis should be on implementation of the decisions of the World Summit on Sustainable Development with the support of the Mountain Partnership.

91. There should be wider use of new and renewable sources of energy in terms of diversifying supply, protecting the environment and achieving sustainable development. The potential of new and renewable sources of energy should be taken into account in drawing up national and international energy policies and ensuring global energy security.

92. The Russian Federation attached great importance to enhancing universal and constructive cooperation in protecting the world's climate with effective measures which took account of the share of individual countries in global greenhouse gas emissions as well as their potential possibilities of meeting agreed commitments. Full implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change must not become of secondary importance. The forthcoming first meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol and the eleventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention marked a new phase in the process of developing universal decisions to combat climate change.

93. International cooperation with respect to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, was of great importance, and due account should be taken of desertification and land degradation in the strategies of the United Nations funds and programmes for achieving Millennium Development Goals.

94. His delegation favoured increased international cooperation under the Convention on Biological Diversity in order to achieve the aims of a genuine reduction in the rate of biological diversity loss by 2010. A significant boost to that end had been given by the entry into force of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, and the Russian Federation was giving close attention to the question of acceding to it.

95. **Mr. El Mejerbi** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that progress with respect to Agenda 21 and the outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development had been insufficient. Cooperation among most of the developing States was hampered by lack of financial resources, technology and human resources, and the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development in particular had an important role to play in eliminating the constraints. The international community should support UNEP in implementing Agenda 21, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, and the Bali Plan of Action, and the Mauritius Strategy. Where the small island developing States were concerned, Hurricane Hugo had highlighted the importance of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction.

96. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya was taking steps to ratify the Kyoto Protocol, whose entry into force had enhanced the international community's ability to address climate change. His Government welcomed the designation of 2006 as the International Year of Deserts and Desertification, and it urged greater financial support for the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. It affirmed the 2005 World Summit Outcome and urged all parties to implement its findings on sustainable development and protection of the environment for the sake of future generations.

97. **Mr. Park** Chun-Kyoo (Republic of Korea) said that his delegation welcomed the commitments and recommendations in the 2005 World Summit Outcome with respect to sustainable development and environmental sustainability. Specific processes and strategies should be developed and timetables should be adhered to in order to bring the international community closer to achieving the Millennium

Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals. Although a consensus on the best way forward would not be easy, States should address the most important issues of sustainable development in a spirit of cooperation and compromise and develop results-oriented recommendations to translate the commitments made at the Summit into substantive action. Stronger regional and global partnerships were also essential.

98. The work of the Commission on Sustainable Development at its twelfth and thirteenth sessions had been of great value. Various types of regional meetings and the active participation of major groups contributed to the success of the Commission. His delegation hoped that discussions at the Commission's fourteenth session would pave the way for the development at its fifteenth session of additional consolidated policy options with respect to energy for sustainable development, industrial development, atmosphere/air pollution and climate change. His delegation also expected that the upcoming Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change would produce substantive results calling for prompt and effective action to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases.

The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.

United Nations A/C.2/60/SR.22

General Assembly
Sixtieth session

Official Records

Distr.: General
8 December 2005

Original: English

Second Committee

Summary record of the 22nd meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 3 November 2005, at 9.30 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Toscano (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Switzerland)
later: Mr. Hart (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Barbados)

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05-58507 (E)

(h) Convention on Biological Diversity (*continued*)

(i) Rendering assistance to poor mountain countries to overcome obstacles in socio-economic and ecological areas (*continued*)

In the absence of Mr. Wali (Nigeria), Mr. Toscano (Switzerland), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 9.40 a.m.

Agenda item 53: Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) (*continued*) (A/C.2/60/L.13)

Draft resolution on the implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)

1. **Ms. Mills** (Jamaica) introduced draft resolution A/C.2/60/L.13 on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and drew attention to paragraph 14, which requested the Secretary-General to include UN-Habitat in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee in recognition of its important role and contribution in the transition from relief to development.

Agenda item 52: Sustainable development (*continued*) (A/60/3, A/60/25, Suppl. No. 25, A/60/25/Add.1, A/60/79, 111,129, 167 and 336)

(a) Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (*continued*) (A/60/115, 158 and 261 and A/C.2/60/L.10)

(b) Follow-up to and implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (*continued*) (A/60/401)

(c) International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (*continued*) (A/60/180)

(d) Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind (*continued*) (A/60/171)

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(g) Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa (*continued*) (A/60/169 and 171)

(h) Convention on Biological Diversity (*continued*) (A/60/171)

(i) Rendering assistance to poor mountain countries to overcome obstacles in socio-economic and ecological areas (*continued*)

Draft resolution A/C.2/60/L.10

2. **Mr. Mushy** (United Republic of Tanzania) introduced draft resolution A/C.2/60/L.10 on the International Year of Planet Earth, 2008, on behalf of the sponsors, which had been joined by Austria, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Colombia, Cuba, Djibouti, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Egypt, Grenada, Guatemala, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Italy, Lesotho, Malaysia, Mauritius, the Philippines, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Swaziland, Togo, Turkey, Uganda, Viet Nam and Zambia. The objective of the Year was to raise public awareness of the importance of earth sciences in building sustainable communities and to emphasize the importance of science and technology in the follow-up to the agreements reached at the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the World Conference on Disaster Reduction.

Resumption of the general debate

3. **Mr. Sevilla Somoza** (Nicaragua), speaking on behalf of the member countries of the Central American Integration System, said that natural disasters were increasingly affecting Central America's sustainable social and economic development and limiting its possibilities of achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The size, frequency and complexity of recent disasters has often overwhelmed national capacities to deal with the aftermath; the international community must provide support for local prevention and mitigation efforts, and for the

development of an early warning system and appropriate construction technologies. Natural disasters could halt economic development and inevitably the poorest sectors were affected. They were often followed by outbreaks of infectious diseases, such as malaria and dengue, and flooding could destroy a country's crops, with a severe impact on sources of income and employment.

4. The help of the international community in implementing development policies that reduced the risks associated with natural disasters would contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, by reducing human and material losses and protecting development achievements. Risk reduction and sustainable human development were goals that should be supported simultaneously, because they helped reduce poverty, promote the participation of marginalized groups, and increase gender equality.

5. Central America had established mechanisms to prevent and mitigate the effects of natural disasters. In 1993, a coordination centre had been established to strengthen national risk management capabilities and, in 1999, the members of the Central American Integration System had decided to establish joint mechanisms for risk prevention and disaster mitigation, with the help of the corresponding national and regional institutions. That had led to the preparation of a regional disaster reduction plan, and the Governments of the region had planned their relevant policies, priorities and actions within its framework. The Puebla Panama Plan included a natural disaster prevention and mitigation initiative, which incorporated risk management considerations in projects in all sectors.

6. **Mr. Logan** (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)) said that the Federation had initiated a number of projects and programmes that were contributing to the Millennium Development Goals on sustainable development and risk reduction, specifically at the community level. The unprecedented generosity after the Indian Ocean tsunami had given it the rare opportunity to rebuild community infrastructure and maintain programming for longer than usual, rather than merely meeting immediate survival needs. Within the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, IFRC programmes in the areas of health, water, sanitation and hygiene had contributed to improving the health of vulnerable communities around the world. Whenever funding permitted, the national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies provided sustainable long-term financial resources, technical assistance and knowledge at the community level.

7. Red Cross and Red Crescent societies in small island developing States supported national development plans that were anchored in disaster preparedness and risk reduction and, at times, had taken a lead role in disaster management training, early warning and pre-positioning of disaster-relief stocks. In the Caribbean and Central America, IFRC hosted a hurricane contingency-planning workshop with all stakeholders every year.

8. As a participant in the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, IFRC viewed risk and vulnerability reduction not as a cost, but as an investment. Disasters were a developmental as well as a humanitarian concern, and concentrating merely on technology could overshadow the key to successful disaster preparedness: the people living in high-risk areas. Community involvement from the bottom up was essential to identify needs and vulnerability patterns and to ensure that warnings were acted upon; information and directives relating to a specific risk needed to flow down from regional and global monitoring systems to civil society networks. To be effective, warning systems needed to be reinforced by trusted partners; Red Cross and Red Crescent staff and volunteers were valuable participants in that effort. IFRC contributed to the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction through increased preparedness, response activities, small-scale mitigation, education, advocacy and partnerships. Such initiatives should be linked to development plans and take the form of emergency and post-emergency relief.

9. IFRC was concerned about the prospect of an increasing number of climate-related disasters that would principally have an impact on the poor. Several national societies had initiated pilot activities which had demonstrated that local activities could make a practical contribution to eliminate risk reduction. In that optic, IFRC believed that a specific e-strategy on disasters, e-preparedness, had merits.

10. **Mr. Siv** (United States of America), referring to the Commission on Sustainable Development, said the United States applauded the recent decision to reform the Commission's working methods, so as to move

beyond negotiations towards actions, through partnership fairs and capacity-building learning centres. It also applauded the Department of Economic and Social Affairs for recognizing that knowledge management was vital to advancing implementation and for using its unique position to gather, manage and disseminate practical information. The new Commission on Sustainable Development was a prime example of what the United States hoped to see in a reformed and increasingly relevant United Nations.

11. The current cycle focusing on energy for sustainable development would offer a critical opportunity to demonstrate again the added value of the Commission's work by sharing best practices, lessons learned and case studies grounded in the experience of practitioners. Access to energy underpinned so many of the broader development goals adopted in the Millennium Declaration and in Johannesburg, and the cycle would offer a timely opportunity to review progress and promote action. The Commission's fourteenth session should be a model for what the United Nations could be at its best.

12. The United States supported incorporating environmental concerns into development work. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) needed to be strengthened on the basis of the agreed package of measures, which would improve coordination, efficiency and funding. There had been very positive developments over the past year, such as the adoption of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building. The existing system of multilateral environmental agreements reflected a good balance of coordination and decentralization. No further supranational authorities were needed. National Governments had the principal responsibility for environmental governance and measures taken at the national level made the greatest contribution to it.

13. **Ms. Vrcan** (Croatia) said that, with its coastal area containing over 1,000 islands, Croatia was strongly aware of the special environmental and developmental challenges faced by small island developing States and supported the Mauritius Declaration and Strategy.

14. The national inventory report for 1990-2003 and the projections on greenhouse gas emissions for the period up to 2020 had been presented under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Also, a proposal had been submitted that the base year emission level should be increased in order to establish a realistic basis for fulfilling commitments under the Convention and a draft decision had been adopted in May 2005 stipulating that Croatia would be allowed a certain degree of flexibility. Her country fully intended to ratify the Kyoto Protocol and was implementing measures to reduce greenhouse gases.

15. A national committee had been established for observance of the International Year of Mountains in 2002; it had raised awareness of the challenges facing mountain peoples and Croatia was actively participating in regional and international initiatives to determine how best to meet those challenges.

16. The Nature Protection Act had been adopted in May 2005 and a report was being prepared on the situation of nature and nature protection, which would provide a baseline for revising the national strategy. The Global Environment Facility had granted funding for the preparation of the third national report on biodiversity, which should be completed by the spring of 2006. The State Institute for Nature Protection was developing a national list of biodiversity indicators and setting up a national biodiversity monitoring programme to improve nature conservation. The Intergovernmental Conferences "Biodiversity in Europe" were important forums for discussing priority issues and shaping the positions to be taken at the Meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, as well as for promotion of pan-European cooperation and activities for implementing the Convention at the regional level.

17. **Mr. Hian** (Singapore) said that the recent spate of natural disasters, including the Indian Ocean tsunami, showed that the real challenge facing the international community was how to achieve sustainable development. Developed and developing countries must work in close partnership and take specific steps to implement the commitments undertaken at the various United Nations summits and conferences on economic and social issues, including those contained in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. His delegation welcomed the policy decisions taken by the Commission on Sustainable Development aimed at accelerating implementation in the areas of water, sanitation and human settlements. Describing some of Singapore's experiences in overcoming environmental sustainability challenges, he remarked that, not so long ago, his country had suffered from frequent floods and pollution. It had

taken years of careful planning and infrastructural works to alleviate the flood situation and channel as much rainwater as possible into reservoirs. Indeed, it had taken a complete change of mindset to clean up the Singapore River. More than just a matter of necessity, making Singapore clean was a strategy for attracting business and tourists. The link between environmental sustainability, economic growth and social development was a foundation for Singapore's sustainable development.

18. Singapore had successfully diversified its water supply sources and had shared its experience with the Maldives, where salt water had contaminated water supplies following the Indian Ocean tsunami. Energy and the environment were also inextricably linked. Through new energy-efficiency initiatives, Singapore aimed to reduce up to 190,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions by 2012 and help achieve a 25 per cent improvement in carbon intensity between 1990 and 2012.

19. His country shared its experiences with others through the Singapore Cooperation Programme. The new challenge currently facing the world was to go beyond short-term environmental performance and to strive for environmental sustainability. Sustainable development required strong commitment and concerted efforts from international agencies, governments, industries, communities and individuals. Constant changes and challenges in the natural and man-made environment also required a constant updating of environmental and development strategies as well as new ideas to further enhance sustainable development for current and future generations.

20. **Mr. Geruc** (Belarus) said that his country had finalized its acc ion to the Kyoto Protocol in August 2005 and participated in the implementation in central and eastern Europe of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. Belarus, which had just become a member of the Commission on Sustainable Development, was committed to sharing the knowledge gained from practical experience with its development partners in line with Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

21. The increase in the number and intensity of natural disasters in recent years underlined the need for collective international action to tackle the problem of climate change, in accordance with the Hyogo Framework for Action. Particular attention must be paid to the establishment of early-warning systems. Belarus believed that sustainable exploitation of forests could enable forestry to make a considerable contribution to the attainment of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

22. **Mr. Sauma** (Mexico) said that Mexico attached considerable importance to resolution 13/1 adopted by the Commission on Sustainable Development at its thirteenth session. Indeed, the international community should not drop its guard although the two-year implementation cycle that addressed the issue of water was over. In that regard, the Fourth World Water Forum to be held in Mexico in March 2006 would enable governments, the private sector and civil society organizations to follow up the policy decisions and actions adopted by the Commission at its thirteenth session with respect to financing, capacity-building and transfer of technology to developing countries, institutional governance and monitoring, in relation to access to basic water and sanitation services.

23. Mexico supported strict compliance with the Kyoto Protocol and was prepared to participate in a balanced dialogue among signatories based on the principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities. However, it would participate only if developing country commitments were voluntary. It would not accept any type of sanctions regime for lack of compliance and was totally opposed to being included in annex I of the Convention. Any voluntary expansion of the commitment regime should be gradual and based on a process of capacity-building, including calculating and timely monitoring of the emissions of various national industrial sectors.

24. In order to achieve global sustainable development, governments, international organizations, the private sector and the main stakeholders must promote new patterns of sustainable production and consumption. Mexico had mainstreamed the need for such changes in the public school curricula as well as in ministerial policies. It was also important to strengthen international arrangements on the protection of forests in order to reverse the loss of ecosystems and biodiversity. He proposed the establishment, during the sixth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests, of a practical and flexible financial mechanism to support the biological diversity of forests. As one of 15 megadiverse countries, Mexico attached considerable importance to the protection of biological diversity.

25. He supported a revamping of environmental governance within the framework of the restructuring of the United Nations in order to give the environment its proper role in the promotion of sustainable development and reiterated the need for comprehensive international cooperation to draw up long-term, development-oriented strategies to address natural disasters. Considerable importance should be given to risk identification and mitigation as well as to preparedness and to protection of the most vulnerable.

26. **Mr. Pang** Kwang Hwok (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that environmental degradation was a major obstacle to sustainable development, adversely affecting human health and impeding national and international poverty eradication efforts. It was caused not only by natural factors such as climate change but also by socio-economic factors. Political will and efforts at the national level were crucial to implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and major United Nations conferences, including the Millennium Summit. His Government was therefore focusing on environmental protection and management for sustainable development in the context of national strategies, including waterway and land readjustment and afforestation projects.

27. His country had acceded to the Kyoto Protocol and to the United Nations Convention on Climate Change in April 2005. It was important to pay keen attention to water-resource management and adequate sanitation and to develop effective early-warning systems for preventing natural disaster risks. More international assistance should be provided to developing countries in their efforts to create a sustainable environment. Commitments to provide ODA and transfer technology should be honoured and priority should be given to building capacity in developing countries. United Nations agencies should accelerate their assistance to those countries in close cooperation with multilateral development and financial institutions.

28. **Mr. Omene** (Nigeria), noting that the results of the first two-year cycle of the programme of work of the Commission on Sustainable Development pointed to the challenges and obstacles that developing countries needed to overcome in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, welcomed the multi-stakeholder approach used during the review and policy sessions of the Commission. However, success would depend on concrete actions at the national level, supported at the global level. The Commission must remain the forum for the consideration of issues related to the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development, with a revitalized Economic and Social Council serving as the principal body for coordination, policy review and dialogue on sustainable development. The international community must honour its collective commitments.

29. Referring to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and its special relevance to Africa, he expressed concern about oversubscription to the Global Environment Facility. Indeed, the allocation of $250 million to the focal area of land degradation had been grossly inadequate and should be increased in the fourth replenishment cycle. The Fund should ease the difficulties that developing countries faced in accessing funds for projects. He supported the invitation to United Nations funds and programmes, the Bretton Woods institutions, donor countries and other development agencies to increase their financial and technical assistance to affected countries.

30. Nigeria had embarked on an ambitious project to check and reverse the rate of desert encroachment and ensure the sustainable management of forest resources. At the most recent Summit of the Community of Sahelo-Saharan States, the President of Nigeria had promoted the idea, endorsed by the African Union, of establishing a green wall for the Sahara, stretching from Senegal to Djibouti. Combined with the TerrAfrica initiative, which aimed to increase the level of investments in sub-Saharan Africa to about $4 billion, that programme would significantly mitigate the negative effects of desertification in Africa.

31. His delegation was deeply disappointed that the seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention had agreed only on a 5 per cent increase in the Convention budget, which would result in a 25 per cent staff reduction. While there was a need to strengthen UNEP to enable it to respond adequately to environmental challenges, the implementation of the International Environmental Governance (IEG) process would contribute in that regard. A wider discussion of the root causes of the weaknesses in environmental governance should be undertaken before seriously entertaining the idea of transforming UNEP into a specialized agency.

32. His Government was pursuing measures to increase the country's energy mix by exploiting its capacity to generate solar, hydro, wind and geothermal energy. The greatest challenge in that regard was to acquire relevant technology that was affordable, efficient and environmentally sound. He welcomed the entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol and reaffirmed his delegation's faith in the Convention as the best legal instrument available for addressing the crucial issue of climate change. Disaster reduction posed a challenge to all countries, especially developing countries, and the international community needed to build capacities for risk reduction, adaptation, early warning and post-disaster reconstruction. He welcomed the Hyogo Framework for Action and called on the international community to support its implementation in developing countries.

33. **Mr. Singh** (Observer for the World Conservation Union (IUCN)) said that the 2005 World Summit Outcome had missed an opportunity to substantially enhance the international community's understanding of sustainable development issues and catalyse collective action. The majority of the planet's essential ecosystem services continued to be degraded and unsustainably managed, although the Millennium Project report had concluded that those services were essential to attaining the Millennium Development Goals and that their continued degradation significantly impaired the world's ability to achieve them by 2015. Governments, donors and multilateral institutions should mainstream environmental sustainability into poverty reduction strategies and frameworks. IUCN was committed to making biodiversity conservation work more effectively for the poor, including through its Conservation for Poverty Reduction Initiative.

34. He welcomed the entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol and looked forward to the forthcoming Conference of the Parties in Montreal. Noting that a temperature rise of two degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels was the threshold for dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system, he urged the Parties to the Convention and to the Kyoto Protocol to initiate a process in Montreal that would achieve equitable cuts in greenhouse gas emissions in the near future. He further encouraged the Parties to improve their understanding of the links between climate change and biodiversity.

35. He welcomed the focus of the recent Conference of the Parties to the Convention to Combat Desertification on the role of pastoralists, who were responsible for managing a significant proportion of the world's drylands and hailed the increased emphasis on implementation of the Convention, noting that the International Year of Deserts and Desertification, 2006, provided a great opportunity for mobilizing international and domestic resources.

36. With regard to disaster reduction, he noted that a review of the damage caused by the December 2004 tsunami indicated that the natural ecosystems that had remained intact had played a vital role in buffering the force of the waves and protecting human settlements. Mangrove forests, in addition to providing vital coastal defences, were also a cornerstone of the region's economy. Post-tsunami reconstruction provided the best chance of integrating ecosystem restoration into coastal planning and development. IUCN was currently working with a wide range of coastal populations in tsunami-affected countries through a planned $47 million programme to restore and conserve mangrove ecosystems.

37. **Ms. Gunasekera** (Sri Lanka) said that the degradation of ecosystems had a direct impact on poverty creation and the escalation of conflicts. The international legal infrastructure for environmental protection and management could therefore be regarded as an important tool for poverty eradication and conflict prevention.

38. In the December 2004 tsunami, Sri Lanka had experienced a natural disaster, incurring loss of life and property of unprecedented magnitude. In their response, individual Governments, the United Nations and other international organizations and civil society had reached beyond geopolitical barriers to render assistance to Sri Lanka, rekindling new confidence in the power of peoples to act in solidarity for a new and better world.

39. The survival rate after natural disasters depended on the relative wealth of the country affected; current levels of loss were unacceptable when there was so much scientific and technological know-how that could effectively be harnessed to mitigate losses. The tsunami disaster in the Indian Ocean, earthquakes in South Asia and the Far East, and hurricanes and mudslides in the Americas had heightened concern over the need for effective and efficient means of

disaster management. She welcomed the establishment of an early warning system for the Indian Ocean and underscored the need for greater priority to be given to global early warning arrangements incorporating regional and subregional systems.

40. Sri Lanka accorded high priority to the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Millennium Development Goals, including target 7 on environmental sustainability. The Government had taken a number of measures to implement its national sustainable development strategy and to strengthen the legislative framework to protect threatened species of flora and fauna, genetic resources and indigenous knowledge. As a country that was particularly rich in biodiversity, Sri Lanka regarded the Convention on Biological Diversity as the key international instrument for the conservation and sustainable use of biological resources and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources.

41. She expressed concern at the increased risk posed to developing countries and small island developing States by climate change. Similarly, she noted that desertification contributed to food insecurity, famine, poverty and political and social tensions, and was thus a serious obstacle to sustainable development. Sri Lanka had taken firm action to honour its commitments to offset the threatening effects of climate change and desertification.

42. There was a need to intensify research and development to support new and renewable sources of energy for sustainable development. Since 1996, when Sri Lanka had established a division on alternative energy within the Ministry of Science and Technology, the Government had undertaken activities on the establishment of fuel wood plantations, use of biogas as transport fuel, industrial heat and electricity generation, and assessments on hydro-electricity and solar and wind energy sources.

43. The international community had not done enough to respond to the destruction of ecosystems, land and soil degradation, loss of forests, fisheries and biodiversity, air and water pollution, and excessive consumption of fresh water. Since those problems were directly linked to an increase in poverty and to a range of social and medical issues, it was of utmost importance to create an enabling international environment for developing countries to obtain financial, institutional and technical assistance to build the required capacity to sustain ecologically friendly development processes that led to poverty eradication.

44. *Mr. Hart (Barbados), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.*

45. **Mr. Chaimongkol** (Thailand) said that, since success rates in achieving the Millennium Development Goals had varied between countries, his delegation looked beyond the outcomes of the 2005 World Summit to new global initiatives that would assist developing countries in effective environmental management and protection. As a middle-income country, Thailand had played an important role in the global campaign to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, and had become an emerging donor, trading partner and provider of foreign direct investment to least developed countries. The concept of global partnership for development had been fully integrated into Thailand's development and foreign policies, both within the context of its relationship with United Nations agencies, and through North-South and South-South cooperation.

46. The current oil price crisis had led to the quest for new and renewable sources of energy. His Government encouraged the promotion of national and international awareness on energy efficiency, and the adoption of an integrated approach to environmental sustainability. Thailand therefore looked forward to the discussions in that regard at the fourteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development in 2006, and reaffirmed his Government's commitment to the full implementation of the Kyoto Protocol.

47. Recalling the spate of recent international natural disasters, he drew attention to the importance of disaster preparedness, and welcomed the mechanisms on disaster reduction and early warning systems that had been introduced.

48. In terms of United Nations reform, his delegation continued to support the establishment of regional centres to complement the work of country offices. Sharing technical expertise and mobilizing existing resources among the regional centres should be encouraged, with the necessary information and communication technology support to facilitate their work. Coordination and information sharing between United Nations agencies dealing with development and environmental issues must also be promoted, in order to avoid duplication and waste.

49. He expressed deep appreciation for the international assistance provided through the United Nations agencies and bilateral arrangements after the tsunami disaster. That response showed that the spirit of cooperation within the international community remained strong.

50. **Mr. Savua** (Fiji), speaking on agenda item 52 (b), welcomed the report of the Secretary-General in document A/60/401. Although his delegation appreciated the initiatives put forward in the document, it was also mindful of the effort required to convert the stated intentions into action and of the need for coordination among United Nations entities and major donor organizations. The current situation would ultimately harm the interests of small island developing States. The report of the Secretary-General contained proposals that would further the sustainable development of those States if properly supported by United Nations entities and endowed with the necessary resources.

51. The symbiotic relationship between the Millennium Development Goals and the Mauritius Strategy had to be borne in mind, together with the responsibility of Governments to monitor progress. Fiji had taken full advantage of the presence there of donors, UNDP and other United Nations entities on the ground to pursue the implementation of its projects, including a major project on biofuels. He appealed to the responsible United Nations entities to complete the projects in countries that were not as fortunate as Fiji to have direct representation, and to convey the notion that all countries were treated fairly and that none were to be excluded. National plans and strategies should be written in consultation with Governments, NGOs and civil society, and the aims and objectives of such programmes must be within the stakeholders' capacity to achieve and maintain them.

52. *Mr. Toscano (Switzerland), Vice-Chairman, resumed the Chair.*

53. **Mr. Mansour** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the unpromising progress reports on actual operations indicated that the international community was planning and making decisions faster than it was taking action. He gave a number of examples of disappointing results in the fields of health, environment, energy and development assistance, which illustrated how important it was to strengthen national capacities for monitoring progress on the Millennium Development Goals and expediting the implementation of the national plans and UNDP projects. The national, regional and international initiatives for meeting the targets established under the Millennium Declaration were most welcome, provided that they addressed the root causes of problems and were based on the outcomes of major United Nations summits and conferences. The 2005 World Summit had been another opportunity for furthering commitments and accelerating collective efforts to advance implementation of Agenda 21 and other outcomes, but it had fallen short of meeting the expectations of many countries in the area of development. However, there was still time to reach the agreed goals, under the leadership of the Economic and Social Council and the functional commissions, in particular the Commission on Sustainable Development. Discussions at the fourteenth session of the Commission should focus on energy efficiency, research and development, transfer of advanced technology, and the promotion of new and renewable sources of energy.

54. With reference to the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, he said the Hyogo Framework for Action would have a considerable positive impact on coordination and would substantially reduce disaster losses, in terms of lives and of the social, economic and environmental assets of communities. Full implementation and follow-up of the defined actions and adequate resource mobilization would increase the resilience of nations and communities to recover from disasters and limit their adverse consequences.

55. His country had recently acceded to the Kyoto Protocol, joining in the international recognition of the global nature of climate change and of the need for the widest possible cooperation and participation in an effective and appropriate international response. The international community should endeavour to highlight the issue of deserts and land degradation by addressing the root causes of desertification and its adverse impact on development, poverty, deforestation, health, environmental sustainability, agriculture and migration. Listening to the message of people living in drylands, identifying ways of coexisting with deserts instead of merely combating desertification, sharing the traditional knowledge of the peoples of the desert, and promoting the role of civil society were areas to be explored during the celebration of the International Year of Deserts and Desertification in 2006.

56. During the International Decade for Action, "Water for Life", 2005-2015, priority should be given to implementing policies agreed at the thirteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, including raising public awareness and integrated management of water resources. The agreed policies on human settlements provided appropriate guidelines for action by all stakeholders, including Member States and regional and international organizations.

57. Mountains, which were fragile ecosystems providing most of the Earth's freshwater supply and repositories of biological and cultural diversity and heritage, should be sustainably developed through conservation, sustainable exploitation of natural resources, coordination among the relevant organizations at the national and international levels, and adequate funding for their protection.

58. **Mr. Ben-Tura** (Israel) said his country had made advances in combating desertification, promoting renewable sources of energy and advancing technology to reduce global disasters. A mostly arid country, Israel had been one of the first to accede to the Convention to Combat Desertification and had been active in the northern Mediterranean desertification clearing house mechanism.

59. Israel had carried out cutting-edge research projects in dryland sustainable development, and its international cooperation agency, MASHAV, was working with other national bodies to provide desertification training and assistance to other countries. Israel would be hosting the international conference to mark the International Year of Deserts and Desertification in 2006.

60. Israel had a strategic plan for sustainable development, including systems for recycling water and sewage effluents, and desalination plants. It was estimated that manufactured water resources, the keystone of sustainable water management for Israel and the region, would account for 55 per cent of water resources by the end of the decade. Although serious water-resource limitations had prevented mass availability to the region, Israel's efforts would be instrumental in increasing the water flow.

61. Regarding renewable sources of energy, in recent years Israel had developed ways of creating alternative energy and had implemented its 2002 decision that at least 2 per cent of electricity would originate from clean energy, increasing by a further 2 per cent every three years, the primary vehicle being the approval of 500-megawatt solar-thermal power plants. The country had also recently signed with Egypt a contract for natural gas — eliminating the need to build a new coal power plant — which would yield 30 to 40 per cent of Israel's total electricity output and was expected to drastically reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the short term. In the wake of Israel's signing of the Kyoto Protocol, a number of complementary draft provisions had been issued in 2004 to improve the clean-energy market and the use of photovoltaic cells in particular.

62. With regard to the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, the country was developing remote-sensing capacities to help identify hazard vulnerability and risk populations and, ultimately, reduce the disaster impact. In collaboration with Columbia University, Ben Gurion University had also designed interferometric radars to monitor dune and sand migration and evaluate the aftermath of the Indian Ocean tsunami and the quality of water in the Red Sea. Together with Israel's rapid deployment of humanitarian aid, all those sources of technology supported aid efforts.

63. **Ms. Holguín** (Colombia) recalled the commitment undertaken at the World Summit on Sustainable Development to ensure more coherent implementation of the three Convention objectives and to achieve by 2010 a significant reduction in the loss of biodiversity and allocate additional financial and technical resources to developing countries. The sustainable use of biological diversity was of paramount importance for her country and for the Latin American region, especially with regard to protection of their natural resources. In that connection, she drew attention to the third meeting of the Ad-Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Access and Benefit-Sharing, mandated by the Conference of the Parties to develop guidelines and welcomed the entry into force of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity, which sought a more balanced approach to the interests of countries importing and exporting genetically modified organisms.

64. The International Disaster Reduction Strategy, should become a pillar of United Nations activities for reducing the severe and ever-growing impact of natural disasters. Disaster reduction must be integrated as a matter of priority into national plans and programmes for sustainable development and poverty alleviation, in

line with the Hyogo Declaration and its Plan of Action. Also, the United Nations system and the international financial institutions had undertaken to implement the Strategy and support the strengthening of national and community disaster-response capacity. To that end, additional donors must be identified and a broader, stable, long-term financing base established, including an allocation from the regular budget of the United Nations.

65. Vulnerability to the effects of climate change and natural disasters must be addressed by the international community as a whole, if only because of their high social and economic costs. Comprehensive people-oriented early warning strategies were also needed in order to alert the risk population in time and improve their response capacity. The report of the Secretary-General echoed the repeated warnings of the Rio Group about the increased intensity of natural disasters and climatic phenomena, which called for an integrated approach. International cooperation was essential to help the developing countries to ensure the transfer of environmentally clean, energy-efficient technologies so as better to protect the environment.

66. **Mr. Nenadović** (Serbia and Montenegro) said that the segment of the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development directed at improving knowledge and strengthening capacities was of particular importance to his country. Training was a vital component of any strategy, for no strategy could be implemented without qualified personnel. Serbia and Montenegro was endeavouring to work out a sustainable development strategy that included the three pillars of economic, social and environmental development. Those efforts had been accompanied by the adoption in the Republic of Serbia of a number of documents on a variety of sustainable development topics, in which due attention had been devoted to land protection and to the National Strategy and Action Plan for the Protection of the Environment, to be adopted shortly.

67. One dimension of the strengthening of the United Nations was the promotion of environmental protection activities. His country fully supported the transformation of UNEP into a more powerful and institutionalized framework for promoting environmental activities.

68. In economic terms, environmental damage in Serbia and Montenegro cost as much as €2 billion annually and required intensified efforts to offset the damage. It was expected that all environmental legislation would have been reconciled with European Union regulations by the end of 2009 and that it would be fully enforced between 2010 and 2014. While the country should have achieved considerable progress on preserving biodiversity by the end of the year, land degradation still posed a serious problem. The ratification process for the Convention to Combat Desertification should be completed in the next few months.

69. The authorities supported the allocation of more resources for the sustainable development of mountain areas. Huge imbalances between those and other areas should be gradually reduced by investment in projects that would emphasize competitive advantages. Efforts should also be made to conserve natural resources while bringing benefits to local populations through sustainable development. In addition, the fact that mountainous areas often transcended State borders made bilateral and regional cooperation essential. By signing the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians, his country had clearly demonstrated its commitment to cooperation for the development of mountainous areas. His delegation welcomed the outcome of the Second Global Meeting of the Mountain Partnership, held in Cuzco in 2004.

70. Serbia and Montenegro, in coordination with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, had begun preparations for hosting the Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" in 2007. The authorities would appreciate the cooperation of other States, especially those in south-eastern Europe, as well as their suggestions and recommendations for the preparation of the list of issues.

71. **Mr. Sopoaga** (Tuvalu) said that, as noted in the report of the Secretary-General (A/60/401), the underlying emphasis of the Mauritius International Meeting on Small Island Developing States had been sustained implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. All efforts should focus on translating the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation into concrete action on the ground in order to address those States' vulnerability and for implementation to be country-driven by the States themselves, on the basis of their own national sustainable development strategies.

72. Given the States' limited human and financial resources, regional intergovernmental bodies must effectively support their implementation efforts. In that connection, he thanked the multilateral and bilateral development partners for their support for the launching of the Tuvalu national sustainable development strategy on the occasion of the High-Level Summit and looked forward to the international community's response regarding appropriate partnerships. In view of the isolation and fragmentation of many small island developing States, some without a local United Nations presence, he urged the Organization to strengthen the coordination of its relevant activities and to consider establishing a permanent presence there.

73. Scientific reports — as well as the assessments of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change itself — had furnished proof that climate change was due to human pollution of the atmosphere. With the sustainable development of many highly vulnerable countries, including small islands, at stake, the time had come to act. The impact of recent environmental calamities had shown that even the richest and most powerful country in the world was not immune to the devastating effects of climate change.

74. Countries like his own were the victims of the world's short-sighted drive to burn more and more fossil fuels. The upcoming Montreal Climate Conference must take serious decisions on future actions to halt climate change, in which the largest historical producers of greenhouse gases must immediately reduce greenhouse gas emissions. New funds were urgently needed for accelerating the disbursement of renewable energy and existing energy-efficient technologies and could be financed from air fare taxes similar to those imposed to combat terrorism. His delegation proposed for the Committee's consideration the holding of a summit of world leaders; only at that level could States give any meaningful political commitment to climate change.

75. **Ms. Mohamed** (Kenya) said that the 2005 World Summit had reinvigorated the resolve to expedite implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, which would come to nothing unless the challenges of environmental degradation were adequately addressed. Development partners must honour their commitments to reverse a trend in which most developing countries — especially those in sub-Saharan Africa — were unlikely to meet the poverty eradication target by 2015. Multilateral environmental agreements played a crucial role in poverty alleviation and sustainable development, but there was a need for long-term strategies supported by adequate funding and strong mechanisms, and for better coordination among related agreements.

76. The outcome of the second meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the Development of a Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management in 2004 and the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention to Combat Desertification in October 2005 had identified poor management of chemicals and unsustainable land-use practices as the causes of environmental degradation that adversely affected the world's poor, most of whom lived in Africa. Her delegation supported efforts to ensure the success of the International Year of Deserts and Desertification, which would raise awareness of the impact of desertification on sustainable livelihoods, and applauded the nomination of Wangari Maathi, Nobel Laureate, as an honorary spokesperson for the event.

77. Her delegation firmly supported the Hyogo Declaration. It welcomed the recently established African Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction and called on the international community to ensure that it received the requisite resources. Of particular importance to Kenya was the strengthening of water-resource management initiatives, one of which was the African Ministers Council on Water.

78. Given the importance of renewable energies to sustainable development, Kenya welcomed the regulatory and policy frameworks that would support the promotion of public and private investments in such energies and looked forward to a review of the World Solar Programme at the fourteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development. It was also vital to protect fragile mountain ecosystems, which were important sources of freshwater and biological diversity and popular tourist destinations, and to promote traditional knowledge so as to preserve the environment for posterity. Kenya also supported the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-Building, adopted in February in Nairobi, and called on the international community to provide adequate financial resources for its effective implementation.

79. Strengthening international environmental governance must involve a wide range of stakeholders with diverse interests; the system should be reformed in an evolutionary manner without making immediate demands of the United Nations system or Member States. Kenya endorsed the ongoing process of international environmental governance within the framework of the Cartagena Decision, and thought that UNEP should be strengthened within its current mandate from an enhanced financial and scientific base.

80. In the interests of sustainable development, Kenya had taken legislative and policy measures on environmental management, biodiversity, early warning systems, drought preparedness and monitoring, climate change and the ozone layer. In conclusion, she invited delegations to attend the Eighth Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species shortly to be held in Nairobi.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.

United Nations A/C.2/60/SR.23

General Assembly
Sixtieth session

Official Records

Distr.: General
8 December 2005

Original: English

Second Committee

Summary record of the 23rd meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 3 November 2005, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Hart (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Barbados)

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05-58513 (E)

In the absence of Mr. Wali (Nigeria), Mr. Hart (Barbados), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.35 p.m.

Agenda item 52: Sustainable development (A/60/3, A/60/25 and Add.1, A/60/79, A/60/111, A/60/129, A/60/336 and A/60/167) (*continued*)

(a) Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (A/60/115, A/60/261 and Corr.1 and A/60/158) (*continued*)

(b) Follow-up to and implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (A/60/401) (*continued*)

(c) International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (A/60/180) (*continued*)

(d) Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind (A/60/171) (*continued*)

(e) Sustainable development in mountain regions (A/60/309) (*continued*)

(f) Promotion of new and renewable sources of energy, including the implementation of the World Solar Programme 1996-2005 (A/60/154 and A/60/82) (*continued*)

(g) Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa (A/60/169 and A/60/171) (*continued*)

(h) Convention on Biological Diversity (A/60/171) (*continued*)

(i) Rendering assistance to poor mountain countries to overcome obstacles in socio-economic and ecological areas (*continued*)

1. **Mr. Skinner-Klée** (Guatemala) said that the signing of the peace accords had ushered in a new era of sustainable development in Guatemala. The country's action-oriented strategy promoted the eco-efficient use of the soil and mountains, sustainable tourism and use of renewable energy. The issues of sustainable development in mountain regions and renewable sources of energy were crucial for Guatemala. The draft resolutions being prepared illustrated the advantages of biennializing items to allow better follow-up and a more up-to-date focus.

2. In Guatemala, widespread soil erosion caused by deforestation, the burning of flora and crop-intensive agriculture had been aggravated by natural disasters. The October mudslides in the wake of hurricane Stan had resulted in 4,000 deaths, mainly in indigenous communities, and serious damage to national infrastructure. Without international support, Guatemala would not be able to maintain its soils in either the tropical forests or in mountainous areas recognized by the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation as fragile, vulnerable to climate change and in need of special protection. Capacity-building and increased technical cooperation for programmes in indigenous mountain communities would be particularly vital.

3. Guatemala was ensuring that indigenous cultures, traditions and knowledge were fully respected in its national mountain development policies and planning, and that indigenous communities had a direct say in decisions affecting their lives. As a member of the International Partnership for Sustainable Development in Mountain Regions, Guatemala would make every effort to implement the Secretary-General's recommendation on increased levels of investment and funding for sustainable development in mountain regions, including through innovative financial mechanisms and approaches such as debt relief and payment for environmental services (A/60/309, para. 84 (i)).

4. Guatemala had integrated renewable energy into its regional and domestic policies on social, economic and environmental development. Under its Constitution, the Government had a fundamental obligation to ensure the efficient use of natural resources; the Constitution also stated that the development of renewable sources of energy was in the public interest. Guatemala's potential in the field of hydraulic resources, biomass (both firewood and plant residues) and solar energy was significant. His country also participated in the Strategy for the Promotion of

Renewable Sources of Energy in Central America, which disseminated information on resources, technologies, manufacturers and financing options with a view to reducing project costs, particularly for rural users. Central America had recently held its Sixth Regional Forum on Geothermic and Other Renewable Sources of Energy to address the energy crisis triggered by spiralling oil prices. On the initiative of Brazilian President Luiz da Silva, the States members of the Central American Integration System (SICA) would be cooperating with Brazil in the transfer of technologies for the production and use of combustible ethanol, biodiesel and other alternative and sustainable energy sources.

5. Guatemala had discovered that the use of alternatives to fossil fuels reduced emissions into the atmosphere, and that the use of renewable energy sources offered opportunities for business and the investment of domestic financial resources. In that connection, he noted the emergence of small-scale enterprises that sold improved ovens and cooking equipment on local markets and new possibilities for supplying electricity to rural populations through the use of alternative sources.

6. His delegation would be closely following the outcome of the next session of the Commission on Sustainable Development on energy for sustainable development, industrial development, atmosphere/air pollution and climate change, the sixth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests and the eleventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Montreal from 28 November to 9 December.

7. **Mr. Cordovez** (Ecuador) said that developing countries' increasing vulnerability to natural disasters and their low level of preparedness undermined their efforts to achieve their development goals, including those set out in the Millennium Declaration. Ecuador, which was highly vulnerable to natural disasters and to the El Niño and La Niña phenomena, was determined to carry out the commitments it had undertaken under the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction.

8. The Sachs report had recognized the vulnerability of the Andean region to disasters. Ecuador had endured mudslides, flooding, tremors, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions that had affected nearby populations dependent on agriculture and tourism or forced them to migrate. Stronger disaster risk reduction management was therefore crucial.

9. Ecuador was firmly committed to the Centro Internacional de Investigación del Fenómeno de El Niño (International Centre for Research on the El Niño Phenomenon) (CIIFEN), established in 2003 and based in Quito. The Centre, which supported regional applied science projects on the El Niño phenomenon, was preparing to launch a Seasonal Forecast Centre in western South America, in cooperation with 128 national meteorological stations in the subregion's six countries.

10. Tourism was an increasingly significant factor in sustainable development, employment and poverty reduction and could contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Tourism must be promoted in the developing countries and their tourism sectors must be strengthened through international cooperation (e.g., fewer restrictions, special advantages and security and sustainability measures).

11. He welcomed the first report of the World Tourism Organization and the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism adopted by that Organization in 1999. The World Committee on Tourism Ethics had a flexible mechanism for putting the Code into practice. He urged those countries which had not yet incorporated it into their domestic legislation to do so as soon as possible and encouraged Member States to join the World Tourism Organization if they had not already done so. Lastly, he appealed to Committee members to support the draft resolution that would be submitted on the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism.

12. **Ms. Lima da Veiga** (Cape Verde) saluted the action undertaken by the United Nations system to ensure effective implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, including the adoption of General Assembly resolution 59/311 on the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of that Programme. Equally commendable were the decision by the Commission on Sustainable Development to devote one day of its review session to a review of the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action, the commitment undertaken by Heads of State and Government at the 2005 World Summit to take urgent and concrete action to address the special needs and vulnerabilities of small island

developing States through the full and effective implementation of the Mauritius Strategy and the establishment of the inter-agency consultative group on small island developing States to serve as a coordination mechanism for the United Nations system. She praised the work of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in favour of the small island developing States.

13. Expressing her delegation's support in general for all the proposals and recommendations set out in the report of the Secretary-General on the Mauritius Strategy (A/60/401), she called for dialogue on the best ways to translate them into action and to bridge crucial gaps identified in the statements made the previous day on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS). She noted with interest the recommendation on the promotion of desirable synergies among all stakeholders at all levels contained in the Summary of the report.

14. The regional meeting of the Atlantic, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and South China Sea (AIMS) countries, held in Mahe, Seychelles, the previous week, had adopted a programme of seven broad priority issues for the region, culled from the sectoral priorities outlined in the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy. A participatory approach would be taken to implementing the programme, which would form the basis for the elaboration of national and regional operational plans of action. The AIMS countries had overcome various obstacles to achieve some progress in setting up national machinery and operational programmes to implement and follow up the Mauritius Strategy. Despite its graduation from least developed country status and the heavy impact of drought, Cape Verde, too, was putting those mechanisms in place.

15. Noting that insufficient coordination at various levels had prevented a number of AIMS countries from attending the regional meeting, she appealed to the United Nations bodies responsible for issues relating to the small island developing States, AOSIS and individual Members States to work together more closely. The Small Island Developing States Unit in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs must be strengthened.

16. In view of the upcoming interregional meeting and FAO special event on small island developing States, the need for a permanent coordination mechanism for the AIMS region was more pressing than ever. Spread across four oceans and three continents, the AIMS countries faced many difficulties in formulating a common strategy for resource mobilization and the promotion of common initiatives. Thus far, the secretariat of the Indian Ocean Commission had been responsible for coordination on an interim basis; however, it lacked the human and financial resources to continue fulfilling that mandate in addition to its primary mandate, which pertained to only three AIMS countries. Her delegation called on the United Nations system to assist the AIMS region in creating a viable coordination structure of its own.

17. Reiterating the link between poverty and desertification, she expressed concern at the insufficient allocation of resources to implement the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa. She urged those countries which had not yet done so to pay their outstanding contributions to the core budget of the Convention. While concerned about the modest increase in the core budget and significant staff reduction decided at the seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, her delegation welcomed the formalization of the relationship between the Global Environment Facility and the secretariat of the Convention. It hoped that similar synergies would be created.

18. Chronic drought was one of the root causes of internal migration and emigration in Cape Verde. Firmly committed to implementing the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, her Government had elaborated national and municipal plans to that end and integrated them into its national development plan. Her delegation was pleased that 2006 had been proclaimed the International Year of Deserts and Desertification and that a number of excellent activities had been planned in conjunction with it. It was grateful to the Government of Algeria for offering to host a summit on the theme of desertification, migration and security.

19. **Ms. Sila** (Samoa), speaking on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum Group, reaffirmed the importance of the Mauritius Strategy and called for the earliest possible implementation of the activities proposed in General Assembly resolution 59/311. The development of a plan of activities with relevant United Nations bodies, the mainstreaming of the Mauritius Strategy into the relevant United Nations agencies and the strengthening of the Small Island Developing States Unit within the Department of Economic and Social Affairs would be particularly important in that context.

20. Two weeks earlier, Samoa had hosted a successful Pacific Regional Meeting to follow up the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy. At that meeting, the Forum had reaffirmed that the Mauritius Strategy, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, the Millennium Development Goals, its own Pacific Plan, regional policies, frameworks and action plans and partnership initiatives were key to achieving sustainable development in the region.

21. Recognizing the critical need to streamline the procedures for obtaining financial and technical resources, the Group was finalizing its Pacific SIDS matrix. The Group also acknowledged the importance of mainstreaming the Mauritius Strategy into country-driven and country-owned national development plans.

22. The Pacific Islands Forum Group looked forward to the forthcoming Inter-Regional Meeting to follow up the Implementation of the Mauritius Strategy, to be held in Rome, and to the special ministerial event on food security and sustainable development in small island developing States that would be sponsored by FAO. The Group also appreciated the decision of the Commission on Sustainable Development to devote one day of its review session to the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy and other activities in the Pacific region.

23. In conclusion, she said that, while accepting primary responsibility for the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy, the small island developing States needed support from the United Nations system and the international community.

24. **Ms. Enkhtsetseg** (Mongolia) said that her country welcomed the launch of the International Year of Deserts and Desertification (2006) and saw it as an important opportunity to enhance further the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa. The World Summit Outcome had stressed the need to address the causes of desertification and land degradation through the mobilization of adequate and predictable financial resources, the transfer of technology and capacity-building at all levels. It was now time to translate those commitments into coordinated action at the international, national and local levels.

25. As a State party to the Convention to Combat Desertification, Mongolia had adopted a national plan of action to combat desertification in 2003 and set up a national committee consisting of representatives of government agencies, academia and non-governmental organizations to monitor implementation of the Convention. The national plan of action aimed, inter alia, at: improving legal and economic measures to combat desertification; formulating and implementing strategies to prevent and halt the spread of desertification through studies on its root causes; organizing awareness-raising campaigns at national and local levels; and enhancing regional and international cooperation.

26. Mongolia was in one of the world's most arid regions and suffered considerably from drought. During the last decade of the twentieth century, areas affected by drought had increased by 3.4 per cent and areas engulfed by desertification had increased by 5.4 per cent, especially in the Gobi Desert region, which covered 42 per cent of the territory of Mongolia. The Government had consequently launched a "Green Belt" programme designed to halt the spread of desertification and sand movement over the next 30 years. Anti-desertification strategies had also been adopted in a number of national development policies.

27. Long-term and short-term measures to strengthen national and local capacity to combat desertification required not only commitment and concerted efforts but also adequate financial support and cooperation. The delegation of Mongolia therefore welcomed the proposed memorandum of understanding between the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

28. **Ms. Núñez de Odremán** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that the 2005 Summit Outcome was merely a working paper; because of its serious flaws, her Government did not view it as establishing any

mandate or obligation for her country. The paper gave priority to designing mechanisms and instruments for States to intervene in conflicts, yet did not discuss strategies and mechanisms for achieving sustainable development. Priority should be given to actions aimed at combating poverty, promoting economic growth and correcting the unsustainable production and consumption patterns created by unfettered capitalism. The relationship between poverty and the environment had been discussed at the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002. Decades of efforts to reach global agreement on sustaining human life on the planet had not resolved the fundamental problem, which was the political and economic philosophy underlying current development patterns.

29. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela had instituted political and institutional reforms based on the concept of the State as a participatory society in which social and economic changes were aimed at maximizing sustainable development. One of its objectives was to integrate environmental management and social management. All citizens were being made aware of the need to preserve the natural environment and encouraged to be actively involved in the design, implementation and monitoring of public policies promoting sustainable development.

30. Water management policies were implemented through local management units in which municipal governments provided services, and communities participated in planning, regulation and control. A meeting had been held on 25 October 2005 to discuss preparations for the Fourth World Water Forum to be held in Mexico in 2006 and discuss successful experiences in water management. Ninety per cent of the population now had access to potable water, and 75 per cent had sewage services. The adoption of the new low-income housing and habitat act ensured that all Venezuelans had access to decent housing.

31. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela was fulfilling its commitments under the Convention on Biological Diversity, decision 391 of the Commission of the Cartagena Agreement and the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. A National Commission on Biosafety had been created to advise the executive branch on biosafety issues. Her country had acceded to the Kyoto Protocol and was a party to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.

32. As an oil-producing country, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela had set in motion a number of initiatives designed to address the energy crisis. The PetroCaribe initiative had been launched on 29 June 2005 in pursuance of the energy cooperation agreement signed by 14 Caribbean countries at the first energy meeting of Caribbean Heads of State and/or Government. PetroCaribe was an energy cooperation initiative designed to resolve existing asymmetries in access to energy resources through a fair and equitable arrangement on trade among the countries of the Caribbean region. It would coordinate policies relating to petroleum and petroleum by-products, gas, electricity, technological cooperation, training, energy infrastructure and alternative energy sources.

33. Any environmental regulations to be agreed by the international community should be based on the principles of non-discrimination, transparency, predictability, national treatment, rejection of unilateralism and non-conditionality. They should go beyond mere commercial activity and promote intersectoral trade so as to strengthen the sovereignty of peoples. The developed countries must change their unsustainable production patterns and honour their commitments concerning ODA.

34. **Mr. Tameo** (Papua New Guinea) said that his delegation supported the efforts of the United Nations system to ensure coordination in the implementation of sustainable development, although Member States also had to assume responsibility in that area. For its part, Papua New Guinea was fully committed to the Mauritius Strategy.

35. Papua New Guinea and other Pacific island States were particularly exposed to natural disasters, such as tsunamis and floods, which disrupted their economic activities and adversely affected their development efforts. The outcomes of the Kobe World Conference on Disaster Reduction were being seriously pursued in the Pacific region and a regional framework had been developed to implement the Yokohama Strategy at the recent Pacific Islands Forum meeting in Papua New Guinea. His country supported the action-oriented approach to the forthcoming Third International Conference on Early Warning and hoped to address there a number of priority issues, such as the establishment of early warning systems.

36. As small island developing States were particularly vulnerable to climate change and its

devastating impacts, Papua New Guinea was committed to the implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol. Its efforts should be supported by the international community.

37. Papua New Guinea participated in the Coalition for Rainforest Initiatives, which provided incentives for countries with rainforests to have access to international markets for emissions trading, which would have multiple benefits such as the eradication of poverty and climatic stability.

38. Underscoring the importance of promoting new and renewable sources of energy, the delegation of Papua New Guinea commended the work of UNESCO to oversee implementation of the World Solar Programme, 1996-2005. Papua New Guinea had great potential to develop and use renewable sources of energy to meet its domestic energy needs and would pursue its policy objectives with the support and assistance of the United Nations system and other development partners.

39. The Convention to Combat Desertification was a vital instrument to address the issue of land degradation. Although considerable progress had been made by the Convention secretariat to work closely with GEF, the Bretton Woods institutions and other partners, available financial resources were inadequate to address land degradation. Development partners should increase their support to affected countries and GEF should increase its fourth replenishment of the Trust Fund to implement the Convention.

40. Papua New Guinea was home to over 5 per cent of the world's biodiversity resources and a party to the Convention on Biological Diversity. In view of the findings of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, the international community should support developing countries that had a significant share of the world's biodiversity and help them conserve their vital resources and address the target of significantly reducing biodiversity loss by 2010. He commended the development of action programmes on the biological diversity of inland water ecosystems, as well as marine and coastal biodiversity to protect increasingly threatened marine biodiversity resources.

41. **Mr. Al-Mowed** (Kuwait) reaffirmed his Government's commitment to good governance, sound economic practices and joint international responsibility for achieving sustainable development in the economic, social and environmental domains. Stronger and more effective partnership was needed with developing States to involve them in international decision-making and help them to meet the challenges of the new world order. The developed States must honour their commitment to allocating 0.7 per cent of their gross national product to official development assistance by 2015. For its part, Kuwait had contributed 1.3 per cent of its gross national product, between 1990 and 2003 to development projects both bilaterally, through the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development, and through regional and international organizations such as the OPEC Fund for International Development and the African Development Bank (ADB).

42. Kuwait continued to make progress towards the Millennium Development Goals, including the goal of attaining environmental sustainability. It had created the Environment Public Authority in 1995, had successfully established dozens of artificial breeding grounds on the ocean floor in order to safeguard biological diversity, and had conducted a unique experiment by planting coral in protected zones. On the other hand, Kuwait's energy consumption was rising at a rate of 3.5 per cent per year, which was too high to achieve sustainability, but difficult to reduce given the rise in global demand and increases in energy consumption levels among producers.

43. Oil-producing States should employ the latest production technology to address such problems, and stabilize global oil prices, which had risen sharply since the 1980s, harming consumers and producers alike. Volatility in the oil markets was exacerbated by natural disasters, instability in oil-producing regions, market speculation, and high taxes on oil in developed States. Kuwait hoped that its investments in refineries and partnerships in Asia and America would help to meet future global demand. Kuwait also reaffirmed its support for the proposal of Qatar to host the first follow-up conference to the International Conference on Financing for Development in 2007.

44. **Mr. Laurin** (Canada) said that his country was demonstrating its commitment to address climate change by hosting the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Montreal in November 2005. It recognized the importance of promoting sustainable global development and of effectively addressing climate change — which also implied dealing with other issues such as development, health and energy

security — and wished to play a leadership role in that area. All countries recognized the need to make their economies more sustainable and secure by adopting efficient, less polluting technologies and energy sources. Canada's own foreign policy was designed to promote a multilateralism based on multiple responsibilities, one of which was the collective responsibility to ensure the well-being of future generations.

45. The task facing the Montreal Conference would not be easy but the shared desire to address climate change directly should enable the world community to come together and initiate productive discussions on real, long-term progress. In recent months, Canada had held over 140 bilateral meetings to discuss options for effective long-term action on climate change. The insights gleaned from those meetings should result in a forward-looking decision in Montreal based on six key elements: ensuring environmental effectiveness; broadening participation; advancing development goals; strengthening market mechanisms; realizing the potential of advanced technologies; and dealing with adaptation.

46. **Mr. Bharati** (Nepal) said that his country was one of the richest in terms of biodiversity and was committed to conserving it in a sustainable manner. Half of Nepal's population lived in mountain regions and were thus particularly vulnerable in times of natural disasters. Since mountain communities shared similar challenges and hardships, an exchange of experiences would help them to utilize better their natural resources and address their social and economic problems. International cooperation mechanisms, such as the Bishkek Mountain Platform or the Mountain Partnership, would provide an opportunity for countries to network and address interrelated aspects of sustainable mountain development.

47. As a party to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Nepal had recently ratified the Kyoto Protocol and was fully committed to international efforts to protect the environment and promote sustainable development. The mountain communities in Nepal were traditionally dependent on mountain resources for medicinal needs, and he called on the international community to contribute to research and development of mountain resources for medicinal purposes.

48. Mountain communities had unique knowledge and experience and the Government of Nepal had, accordingly, adopted development policies and plans emphasizing the protection of the natural environment and sensible use of resources.

49. The Nepalese Government had taken a number of public and private initiatives to boost awareness and promote the cause of mountain development. However, terrorism had exacerbated the situation, causing even greater hardship to mountain communities, and the Government was currently granting the highest priority to restoring peace and security.

50. In an attempt to ensure equal development of all regions, particularly remote mountain areas, the Government had introduced a number of targeted programmes, including the promotion of ecotourism. The King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation had also undertaken various environment programmes to ensure a balance between human needs and the environment, with a community-based approach aimed at long-term sustainability.

51. Since ecological and environmental problems were global concerns, it was important to promote cooperation among government bodies, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and local authorities in implementing environment programmes. International cooperation and solidarity for sustainable mountain development should receive greater support, thereby helping poor mountain countries in their endeavours to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development.

52. **Mr. Zoubi** (Jordan) said that, owing to the diversion of the Jordan River since the 1967 war, the evaporation rate from the Dead Sea exceeded the rate of water inflow, causing a steady decline in the water level of nearly one metre every year. At that rate, the Dead Sea would dry up completely within 50 years, with dangerous economic, social and political consequences. If the Sea dried up, the wind would spread the remaining salty minerals to the neighbouring fertile fields in the Jordan Valley, turning what was a natural greenhouse into a desert. As the water level declined, so would the water pressure at the bottom of the sea, allowing freshwater from surrounding aquifers to seep in.

53. In May, Jordan, Israel and the Palestinian Authority had signed an agreement on the construction of a canal that would draw water from the Red Sea,

raise it and then drop it into the Dead Sea 400 metres below sea level. The steep drop would generate enough electricity to help pump in water and power a desalination plant that would provide 850 million cubic metres of freshwater annually. Holiday resorts and a water park would be built along the route. The first phase of the project — a two-year $20-million feasibility study — would be partly funded by the World Bank. The study would indicate the best way to move the water northward and whether the water of both Seas would mix or merely bond in layers. It was estimated that the final phase would cost between $4 and $7 billion.

54. The project, once operational, would be a model of sustainable development, in which an entire ecosystem was saved by harnessing resources generated from the project itself. Excess freshwater would be redirected to the lands of the three parties to the agreement. His delegation looked forward to continued international support for the project, and to the implementation of all its phases.

55. **Mr. Migliore** (Observer for the Holy See) said that a fragmented sectoral approach to the problems of development must be replaced by a holistic and multisectoral one. Among the first cluster of threats identified by the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change were economic and social threats, including poverty, infectious diseases and environmental degradation. In facing them and in promoting the development of responsibility and solidarity, local communities would have to be involved in evaluating and conserving nature, and they must receive a fair share of benefits. Costs to natural ecosystems would need to be taken into account in all economic decisions, and protection of natural assets would have to be given much higher priority in governments' planning, investment and budgeting.

56. Given the importance of forests and the high rates of forest loss, the finalization of an international treaty on the protection of forests was much to be desired. Clean drinking water and basic sanitation were also essential; it was thus, in the interest of all countries to invest in the implementation of integrated water resource management programmes.

57. The next biennial cycle of the Commission on Sustainable Development would be devoted to themes central to peace and human development, above all in the poorest areas with the slimmest capacity to adapt, scarce energy resources and greater exposure to the consequences of climate change. It was encouraging to witness the growing awareness of climate change demonstrated, for example, at the G-8 Summit in Gleneagles. Serious discussions should follow on how States could provide incentives for the further development of renewable energy sources, begin to phase out environmentally harmful subsidies and invest in research and development of clean, efficient and cheap replacements for fossil fuels.

58. **Mr. Sabbagh** (Syrian Arab Republic), recalling that the principle of common but differentiated responsibility was the cornerstone of global cooperation for sustainable development, endorsed the Secretary-General's call for donors to target funding support to developing countries in key policy options and practical measures. The upcoming session of the Commission on Sustainable Development should focus on research and development, technology transfers, and renewable energy that developing countries could afford.

59. The proposed "Water for Life" conference would be an important step in realizing the first and seventh of the Millennium Development Goals. Desertification continued to affect hundreds of millions of people, and the international community should ensure that predictable sources of funding were available to implement the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification drawing on the work of the Global Environment Facility in that area. The upcoming International Year of Deserts and Desertification in 2006 would be a good opportunity to promote United Nations desertification programmes.

60. The Israeli delegation had evidently forgotten that Israel was contributing to desertification in the occupied Arab territories by depriving Arab citizens of their inalienable right to access water resources, and by stripping land, uprooting trees, and burying nuclear and chemical waste in the occupied Arab territories.

61. **Mr. Sermoneta** (Israel), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the allegations made by the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic were groundless. That representative had recently heard from the Executive Director of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia that there was no substantial evidence to support his claims. Despite that, the Syrian delegation had managed to have those lies included in draft resolution A/C.2/60/L.11, currently

before the Committee. As in many other instances, the Syrian representative seemed to believe that, when repeated often enough, a lie became truth. The Committee should reject such attempts unequivocally.

62. **Mr. Taleb** (Syrian Arab Republic), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that his assertions about the practices of the occupying force could be verified in many United Nations reports, especially the report on the repercussions of those practices on the living conditions of the Palestinian people, particularly the inhabitants of the occupied Golan and East Jerusalem. That report showed that the occupying force was transforming agricultural lands of the Arab citizens into a desert, uprooting trees and causing erosion. Numerous reports attested to the fact that the occupying authorities were not complying with the decisions of the United Nations and were violating the rights of the Arab peoples living under occupation. Those rights had been reaffirmed at several summits and meetings of the United Nations. The Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development had stated that foreign occupation was a threat to sustainable development. Israeli practices included the theft of natural resources through intensive use of the environment. Peoples living under the occupation were not able to achieve sustainable development.

The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.